

# **Sociological Bulletin**

JOURNAL OF THE INDIAN SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY



VOLUME 46 NUMBER 1 MARCH 1997

# INDIAN SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Registered in Bombay in 1951 under Act XXI 1860

## MANAGING COMMITTEE Office Bearers

*President:* Indra Deva  
*Secretary:* S. L. Sharma  
*Treasurer:* Mohini Anjum

### Members:

Chandrashekhar Bhat (Hyderabad), Harishchandra Doshi (Surat), N. Jayaram (Bangalore), K. Ranga Rao (Waltair), N. Vijaya (Hyderabad), Mohini Anjum (New Delhi), Nandu Ram (New Delhi), S. N. Pawar (Kolhapur), P. N. Pimpley (Chandigarh), K. L. Sharma (New Delhi), A. L. Srivastava (Varanasi), Ishwar Prasad Modi (Jaipur), Jaganath Pathy (Surat), Jagdish Kumar Pundir (Meerut), Pariyaram M. Chacko (Shillong)

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Indra Deva (Raipur)  
Mohini Anjum (New Delhi)  
George Mathew (New Delhi)  
Yogendra Singh (New Delhi)

S. L. Sharma (Chandigarh)  
D. Sundaram (Madras)  
Surender Jetley (Varanasi)

**M. N. Panini** (New Delhi) *Managing Editor*

## EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dipankar Gupta (New Delhi)  
Partha N. Mukherji (Bombay)  
Indu Mathur (Jaipur)  
A. C. Sinha (Shillong)  
S. L. Srivastava (Raipur)  
U. R. Nahar (Jodhpur)

Hetukar Jha (Patna)  
P. K. Bose (Calcutta)  
Ratna Naidu (Hyderabad)  
Suma Chitnis (Bombay)  
Sujata Patel (Bombay)  
G. S. Aurora (Bangalore)

KP-693  
(12.4.2001)

All correspondence pertaining to membership of the Society, circulation of the *Sociological Bulletin* and any other business should be addressed to the **Secretary, Indian Sociological Society, Institute of Social Sciences, B-7/18 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110 029**. Members and subscribers are requested to communicate change of address to the office of the Society at the earliest quoting their membership/subscription number.

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Current Issues		Back Issues	
	Per Volume	Per Number	Per Volume	Per Number
India	Rs. 150	Rs. 80	Rs. 160	Rs. 85
Foreign	\$ 45	\$ 25	\$ 50	\$ 30

Cheques should be made payable to 'Secretary, Indian Sociological Society'. Outstation cheques should include bank charges of Rs.10 in India and \$ 1 abroad.

*Sociological Bulletin* is published every year in March and September. Those who do not receive copies in time must write to the Secretary of the Society within three months from the date of publication.

CUC-HO 61856-5-4p693

**SOCIOLOGICAL BULLETIN**  
*Journal of the Indian Sociological Society*

Volume 46

Number 1

March 1997

**CONTENTS**

5

Towards a More Meaningful Study of  
Ecology, Society and Culture

*Indra Deva* 1

Eurocentrism and its Avatars:  
The Dilemmas of Social Science

*Immanuel Wallerstein* 21

Studying Problems of Aging

*M. S. Gore* 41

Participatory Development: Some  
Areas of Current Concern

*Hari Mohan Mathur* 53

**Symposium**

Newness in Sociological Enquiry

*Andre Beteille* 97

**Book Reviews**

Beth Roy. *Some Trouble With Cows:  
Making Sense of Social Conflict*

*Yoginder Sikand* 111

Dennis E. Mithaug. *Equal Opportunity  
Theory*

*N. Jayaram* 112

D. L. Sheth and Ashis Nandy (eds). *The  
Multiverse of Democracy: Essays  
in Honour of Rajni Kothari*

*Jaganath Pathy* 115

Henry S. R. Kao, Durganand Sinha and  
Ng Sek-Hong (eds). *Effective  
Organizations and Social Values*

*Sherry Sabbarwal* 119

J. P. S. Uberoi. *Religion, Civil Society  
and the State: A Study of Sikhism*

*Nirmal Singh* 121

K. Munirathna Naidu (ed). *Peasant Movement  
in India*

*Paramjit S. Judge* 124

Mark Juergensmeyer. *Religious Nationalism  
Confronts the Secular State*

*S. L. Sharma* 126

M. Atchi Reddy. <i>Lands and Tenants in South India: A Study of Nellore District 1850-1990</i>	Paramjit S. Judge	130
--	-------------------	-----

Vinod Pavarala. <i>Interpreting Corruption: Elite Perspectives in India</i>	Naresh Singh	132
---	--------------	-----

### Profession

Secretary's Report	S. L. Sharma	135
--------------------	--------------	-----

Discussion: Varna and Jati— Some New Thoughts	Harshad R. Trivedi	139
--	--------------------	-----

Obituary: Aileen D. Ross	Mohini Anjum	142
--------------------------	--------------	-----

New Life Members		144
------------------	--	-----

Style-sheet for Reviewers		145
---------------------------	--	-----

Database of Prospective Reviewers		147
-----------------------------------	--	-----

<i>Sociological Bulletin</i> 1996 Index		148
---	--	-----

<i>Announcement</i>		152
---------------------	--	-----

---



**SOCIOLOGICAL BULLETIN**  
*Journal of the Indian Sociological Society*

Volume 46

Number 2

September 1997

**CONTENTS**

Problems and Paradoxes of Inductive  
Social Science: A Critique of  
Ramkrishna Mukherjee

*Pradip Kumar Bose* 153

Individual Rights Versus Collective  
Rights: The Debate on the Aboriginal  
Peoples of Canada

*Toby Morantz*

Ecology and Development in India:  
A Field and its Future

*Amita Baviskar*

Parks, People and Protest: The Mediating  
Role of Environmental Action Groups

*Ranjit Dwivedi*

The Influence of Indian Islam on  
Fundamentalist Trends in Trinidad  
and Tobago

*Nasser Mustapha* 245

**Book Reviews**

A. M. Shah, B. S. Baviskar and E. A. Ramaswamy  
(eds). *Social Structure and Social Change*,  
Volume 4. *Development and Ethnicity*

*Mohini Anjum* 267

Archana Ghosh and Sami S Ahmad.  
*Plague in Surat: Crisis in Urban Governance*

*K. Lavanya* 269

Arup Maharatna. *The Demography of Famines:  
An Indian Historical Perspective*

*K. P. Singh* 271

Carol J. Auster. *The Sociology of  
Work: Concept and Cases*

*Biswajit Ghosh* 272

D. Bakshi Sinha and P. S. K. Menon (eds).  
*Environmental Sanitation, Health  
and Panchayati Raj*

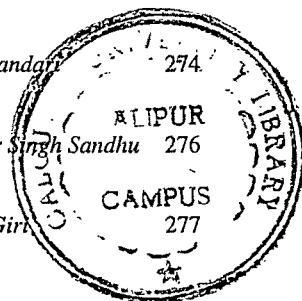
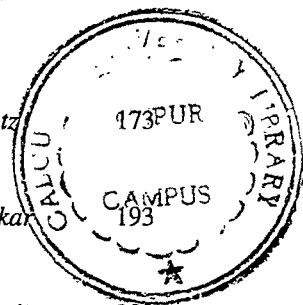
*Mala Bhandari* 274

D. Parthasarthy. *Collective Violence in  
a Provincial City*

*Ravinder Singh Sandhu* 276

K. L. Sharma. *Social Stratification in  
India: Issues and Themes*

*Ananta Giri* 277



Naila Kabeer. <i>Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought</i>	Aparna Rayaprol	280
Renuka Singh. <i>Women Reborn: An Exploration of the Spirituality of Urban Indian Women</i>	Sushmita Das Gupta	283
R. S. Bora. <i>Himalayan Migration: A Study of the Hill Region of Uttar Pradesh</i>	A. K. Sharma	285
Siddique Ahmad. <i>Criminology: Problems and Perspectives</i>	Ram Ahuja	286
Sumi Krishna. <i>Environmental Politics: People's Lives and Development Choices</i>	Ritambhara Hebbar	288
T. K. Oommen. <i>Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity: Reconciling Competing Identities</i>	T. N. Madan	291
Vasudha Dalmia and H. von Stietencron (ed.). <i>Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity</i>	Mohammad Talib	293

#### Profession

Report of a Seminar on India's Urban Development: Issues and Perspectives	Rajesh Gill	299
New Members of Indian Sociological Society		302
— <i>Revised Membership Fee</i>		302
Style-sheet for Reviewers		303

# TOWARDS A MORE MEANINGFUL STUDY OF ECOLOGY, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Indra Deva

The quest for a meaningful study of ecology, society and culture inevitably leads one to consider in some detail the direction which our discipline should take. In trying to do so I shall speak plainly, without mincing matters or playing safe. For, I do think that our hesitation to bring into the ambit of academic discourse that which we really believe to be true, has been a major cause of the stunted growth of social sciences in India. Of course, I can be wrong on many points. But unless faults are brought out in the open, there is little chance of their being remedied.

Concern for ecology is a good vantage point for examining the nature, direction and goals of development; and also the role that sociology and other social sciences are expected to play in this whole process. The way various forces of 'development' are damaging environment and threatening the very existence of humankind has once again shaken modern man's self-righteous complacency. This is perhaps the second shock that has forced modern man to think about what is being done in the name of progress.

The first shock was an aftermath of the First World War. The intensity of its jolt was made more severe by the Great Depression of the early 1930s. That first shock gave birth to powerful works like Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History*, and Pitirim A. Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. Such works, each in its own way, forecast the doom of Western civilization.

Before the First World War the elites of the West had an overbearing sense of confidence in themselves, their rationality, and their civilization. They were sure that their society was inexorably bound to

---

Presidential Address at the XXIII All India Sociological Conference, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, 23-25 November 1996

---

traverse higher and higher echelons of progress. This was perhaps natural. Ever new victories over the forces of nature, and conquest of far-flung lands in all parts of the globe had engendered in them an unquestioning belief in the incomparable superiority of their society and culture.

Today, even though reckless pursuit of the current model of development has brought humankind almost to the brink of destruction of all life on this planet, there does not seem to be a commensurate seriousness in the search for alternatives. After all, this is not the only form of society that humankind can have. Man has known many types of societies and cultures. It may neither be desirable nor possible to revert to any one of these earlier forms but we can surely strive to explore better socio-cultural possibilities through intelligent use of the knowledge and techniques that humanity as a whole has accumulated.

## ECOLOGY AND WORLDVIEW

Man has lived on this earth for hundreds of thousands of years. But he has never threatened so perilously its environment as he has been doing during the two or three centuries of the modern era. It appears to me that this cataclysmic change has been brought about primarily by the critical transformation in man's image of himself and in man's view of the world around him.

In all pre-modern cultures—be they tribal or peasant—man looked upon himself as a part of creation as a whole. He treated other animals, trees, and inanimate objects not only as equals but considered them even venerable. Thus in tribal societies particular clans have various animals, trees and inanimate objects as their totems, which are believed to be the ancestors of the clan and are considered sacred.

In the peasant civilization too man has no attitude of disdain towards nature. India, of course, is a good example of a sustained and mature peasant civilization. As all of us know, not only the cow but the deadly serpent, *nag*, is worshipped throughout India. J. Ph. Vogel (1926) has given a comprehensive account of the startling similarities in all parts of

India regarding beliefs and rituals connected with serpent worship. Tulsi, pipal, bargad (*vat*) and a large number of other trees are considered sacred, and cutting them down and unnecessarily chopping off their branches or even plucking their leaves is regarded as sinful. The saint poet Maluk Das enjoins us not to cut off any green branch. He says that a cut off branch turns into a sapless arrow. In Kerala, there has been a vigorous tradition of maintaining sacred groves. In Rajasthan there is a community whose members would prefer their own bodies to be slashed rather than allowing the cutting of trees or hunting of deer.

Rivers and mountains too are sacred. Ganga is believed to be so sacred that not only a dip in it but even the uttering of its name from a hundred miles rids one of all sins. It has been common among the folk to take a vow in the name of Ganga to establish the authenticity of a statement. Atonement is sought even for the violence done to the earth in ploughing it or in digging it for providing foundation to a building. Appropriate worship of the earth has to be performed before these activities are started.

The foundations of such attitude of reverence towards the elements and forces of nature lie deep in time. In the Rigveda, they are conceived as gods and goddesses. Apart from the sun which is looked upon as a god in many religious traditions, fire and wind too are gods, that is, Agni and Marut respectively. The beautiful rosy dawn is personified as the goddess Usha.

Thus in peasant civilization both elite and folk traditions share a *Weltanschauung* which is imbued with such a deep reverence towards nature that it strongly precludes violence to the environment. This is no less true of the *Weltanschauung* of tribal cultures.

The modern industrial era, however, is marked by a rupture of this tradition. Unprecedented advances in science and technology have made man too sure of himself. He has begun to adopt the supercilious attitude of thinking himself the master of the whole world and takes it for granted that nature is meant to be exploited by him. The cardinal motive force of unlimited acquisitiveness and the unchallenged ideal of an 'ever-rising standard of living' (whatever that means) has inevitably led to incalculable damage to the environment. The insatiable hunger of a plethora of rapidly proliferating factories continues to devour more and more forests, and the outflow of pollutants from industries poisons the

rivers and makes fields barren. It would be perilous to ignore the frightening consequences of the green house effect; and modern man has made a big hole even in the ozone layer that protects our planet.

But the most disconcerting fact is that all this industrialization has failed to keep its promise of a happy life for man. It was once thought that when machines would do all the drudgery, man would be free to pursue the finer things of life, such as music and poetry. But to our utter discomfiture we find that the more industrialized a society becomes, the more are people prone to hurry and anxiety. Even when they have some time to spare, their state of mind hardly has the serenity to enjoy good music or literature. Man in the industrial societies tends to remain so bored that his boredom can be broken only by massive doses of excitement. This is why there is a surfeit of violence and sex in popular motion pictures and novels. When the food is insipid one needs some spicy *achar* (pickle) to gulp it down. Modern life has become so monotonous that it is unbearable without the kicks served through the media of mass culture.

In short, the 'development' achieved at the cost of continuing devastation of environment seems hardly worth striving for. The fact that the Soviet experiment is in a shambles, does not by itself prove that all is well with Western industrial society. In fact, the weight of the accumulated evidence that has been marshalled by Western sociologists themselves presents a gloomy picture. Modern industrial society is marked by rising levels of alienation and anomie, and an increasing propensity to threaten the ecological balance.

### THE CHALLENGE FOR SOCIOLOGY

It appears to me that the basic challenge for sociology today is to try to find a way out of this impasse. But sociology at its present level of development does not seem to be equal to this task.

One important reason for the lopsided state of our discipline seems to be its excessive Western-ethnocentrism. Recently, the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences considered in some detail the parochial (Eurocentric) nature of social sciences

notwithstanding its claim to universality—‘universal relevance, universal applicability, universal validity’. This commission consisted of distinguished scholars belonging to various countries. Six of them were from the social sciences, two from the natural sciences and two from the humanities. Its report was circulated in late 1995. This report does take note of the criticism of claims to universality with regard to the selection of topics of research and subjects studied; the narrow social base of recruitment of the researchers; and the epistemological underpinnings of the analyses.

To my mind, however, this leaves out a very important element that undermines the universality of current social sciences, particularly sociology—its narrow and non-representative empiric base. Insofar as the social sciences, including sociology, claim to be sciences, their inferences must be based on the observation of some empirical reality in terms of which these are verified and validated. But what is the empirical reality on which the bulk of the subject matter and inferences of sociology, as it exists today, are based? By and large this empirical reality pertains to modern industrial society.

We must recognize that modern industrial society occupies a very small fraction of the time during which human societies have been in existence. Human beings, and consequently human societies, have been there for hundreds of thousands of years, while modern industrial society has been in existence only for a few centuries. And for better or for worse, modern industrial society is critically different from all other forms of human society. Thus, when generalizations are made or inferences drawn about human society as such, on the basis of the study of modern industrial society, these are based on a very small and very unrepresentative sample. I strongly feel that Indian sociologists are in a position of distinct advantage for correcting this bias and deficiency of current sociology. The sociologists in India know two kinds of socio-cultural systems—the modern industrial and the traditional peasant. The first of these we know largely through books and to varying degrees from our own experience and the second because of our birth and socialization in this kind of system. In my view, knowing two socio-cultural systems is more than double the advantage. For if one knows two systems one can think of a third and a fourth also. But those who know only one system tend to think of it as the only possibility.

## NEED FOR THE STUDY OF PEASANT CIVILIZATION

Unfortunately, adequate attention has not been given to the systematic study of peasant civilization. This leaves a wide gap in our understanding of socio-cultural phenomena and is a serious handicap in our quest for alternative socio-cultural systems. Robert Redfield did make a beginning through his *Peasant Society and Culture* (1956), but as he candidly recognized it was only a beginning—'a very preliminary exploration' as he put it. And not much headway has been made in this direction. It is somewhat disconcerting that while there has not been much serious effort to build upon the insights provided by this work, a large number of village studies continued to be carried out following the conceptual model given by his earlier book, *The Little Community* (1955), on which Redfield had raised serious doubts in this later work.

The fact seems to be that no social science has made a systematic effort to study the social structure and culture of peasant civilizations. Sociologists have largely studied modern industrial societies, and social anthropologists have been traditionally concerned with tribal cultures. In this process peasant civilizations which have contained the bulk of human population since the dawn of history have been almost entirely neglected.

Apart from the question of numbers, the important thing is that peasant civilization is a distinctive socio-cultural type. It is *sui generis*. It cannot be adequately understood merely as a point on some continuum. Peasant civilizations seem to share some distinctive socio-cultural characteristics across the globe. To take only one example, Sorokin, Zimmerman and Galpin have brought out in their *Systematic Sourcebook in Rural Sociology* (1931) some distinctive characteristics of the family in societies based on plough agriculture. They have also described the importance of the 'gestalt of familism' in such societies (1931, II: 41-48). These fit in so well with the basic features and functions of the Indian joint family that when I discuss the Indian joint family with my students, I can almost entirely depend upon their work for describing it. However, to my mind these great sociologists have made a mistake in referring to this type of family as 'rural family'. The fact is that in peasant civilizations this type of family prevails in the urban centres also. On the other hand, in industrial societies this type of family is not



found even in rural areas. Thus, this kind of family is the typical family of the peasant civilizations and not the 'rural family'. Wide and systematic explorations are likely to reveal many more structural and cultural characteristics that are common to peasant civilizations.

Systematic study of peasant civilization will not only deepen our understanding of Indian society, it will also enhance our knowledge about human society as such. During the course of thousands of years of their existence, many peasant civilizations have maintained remarkable continuity and stability. For instance, the society reflected in the *Jatakas*, which were composed some two thousand five hundred years ago, was not radically different from the society as it existed before the advent of the British rule in India. To be sure there were many socio-cultural changes during these millennia, but the basic structure and culture of the joint families, castes and village communities found in the *Jatakas* are not essentially different from those of these cardinal institutions in pre-British times, and to a certain extent even now.

Such a long span of existence gave the institutional, valuational and attitudinal patterns of peasant civilizations enough time to crystallize, adjust and cohere. The relative stability of these patterns provides us a valuable opportunity to study how various elements of a socio-cultural system establish and sustain vibrant interrelationships with each other. In peasant civilizations, apart from modes of cooperation, even the frictions and conflicts tend to crystallize. There are not only joking relationships, there are quarrelling relationships also.

I would have liked to use the term peasant society instead of peasant civilization. But I am not doing so to avoid a confusion. A peasant civilization has a dual structure. The two segments are variously referred to as 'aristocratic and peasant', 'classical and folk', 'elite and folk', 'hierarchical and lay culture', 'great and little traditions', and so on. Robert Redfield has employed the term 'peasant society and culture' to refer only to the latter of these two segments. Therefore, using 'peasant society' to designate peasant civilization as a whole could have caused confusion. I, however, prefer the term 'folk' for what Redfield calls peasant. George M. Foster too has used the term folk in the same sense (1953); and Redfield clearly recognizes that he is using peasant for what Foster called folk (Redfield 1956: 85). In fact while quoting a passage from Foster, Redfield substitutes peasant for Foster's folk (Ibid.: 41).

When we use the term folk, we can refer to the other segment of society and culture as the elite; and the folk and the elite together constitute a peasant civilization.

### QUEST FOR CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND SOURCES

Village studies which were undertaken on a large scale after the Second World War are sometimes thought of as embodying the study of peasant society. Although these village studies have surely added to our knowledge about village life, to my mind they do not constitute the best way to understand the structure, processes and dynamics of peasant society or peasant civilization. They are based on a conceptual model that seems inadequate for the kind of socio-cultural reality that they seek to investigate. I must make it clear that I have no objection to the method called 'participant observation'. Our knowledge of society and culture is so limited that we cannot afford to leave aside any method of investigation. All possible methods and techniques should be fully utilized and orchestrated. My doubt is about the appropriateness of the conceptual framework on which such studies are based.

The village studies are based essentially on the conceptual model of the little community, which has been neatly spelled out in Robert Redfield's book, *The Little Community* (1955). Of course, this is a conceptual construct and no concept or construct should be expected to be replicated in its pure form in real life. But a concept is surely intended to bring out the essential characteristics of the phenomenon which is sought to be studied through it. It seems fairly clear however that the concept of little community does not size up the essential nature of a peasant village. The little community is conceived basically as a socio-cultural whole. But *essentially* a village in a peasant civilization is not a socio-cultural whole. Detailed study of parts too is understandable. But the details about the part become meaningful only if they are put in the perspective of the whole. One can become a specialist on the little finger, but one will be able to understand its movements, and even its internal processes, only when these are seen in their relation to the organism as a whole.

As Redfield in his later and far more mature work, *Peasant Society and Culture*, amply demonstrates, peasant society is essentially a part

society. Though this theme runs throughout this later work, the following passage merits reproduction at some length:

The culture of a peasant community, on the other hand, is not autonomous. It is an aspect or dimension of the civilization of which it is a part. As the peasant society is a half-society, so the peasant culture is a half-culture. When we study such a culture we find two things to be true that are not true when we study an isolated primitive band or tribe. First, we discover that to maintain itself peasant culture requires continual communication to the local community of thought originating outside of it. The intellectual and often the religious and moral life of the peasant village is perpetually incomplete; the student needs also to know something of what goes on in the minds of remote teachers, priests, or philosophers whose thinking affects and perhaps is affected by the peasantry. Seen as a 'synchronic' system, the peasant culture cannot be fully understood from what goes on in the minds of the villagers alone. Second, the peasant village invites us to attend to the long course of interaction between that community and centers of civilization. The peasant culture has an evident history; we are called upon to study that history; and the history is not local; it is a history of the civilization of which the village culture is one local expression (1956: 40-41).

This is in marked contrast to the four basic characteristics of the little community put forth by Redfield in his earlier book, *The Little Community*. Briefly, these defining qualities of the little community are: distinctiveness, smallness, homogeneity, and all pervasive self-sufficiency (1955: 4). Obviously, a village in a peasant civilization like that of India does not essentially fit in with this model. A peasant village is hardly distinctive in the sense that there are many other villages around it, and sometimes even connected with it, which are just like it in their social structure and culture. And this commonness is understood and recognized by everyone. As far as group consciousness is concerned, there surely is some consciousness of belonging to the village but there also is consciousness of belonging to a caste and a kinship network which go far beyond the confines of the village. And the consciousness of belonging to these latter groups may be much stronger

than that of belonging to the village. Of course, some peasant villages can be small. But the methodological offshoot of this characteristic that it is 'so small that either it itself is the unit of personal observation or else, being somewhat larger and homogenous, it provides a unit of personal observation fully representative of the whole' (Ibid.: 4) is hardly applicable to a peasant village like that of India. The society in these peasant villages is so differentiated and stratified that no unit is fully representative of the whole. The third defining quality of the little community is that it is homogeneous. I need not labour on the point that the typical peasant village is socially and culturally not homogenous. The fourth defining quality of the little community that it is pervasively self-sufficient also does not hold good for a peasant village. For example, most of the Indian villages are exogamous, and thus a boy or a girl cannot find a mate within the village. Many villages do not have all the essential occupational groups such as the iron-smith, the carpenter or the potter. They traditionally depend on other villages for such services.

Undoubtedly most of the village studies based on the little community model do mention in their prefaces that the village is related to the outside world. Sometimes they also describe some of such relationships. But this is not enough. Relationship with other villages and towns is so intrinsic and essential to the peasant village that this must be built into the conceptual model for its study.

Robert Redfield's later work, *Peasant Society and Culture*, clearly shows that he had become acutely conscious of the fact that he had moved away from the conceptual model of the little community. In the very beginning of this book, in the 'Acknowledgement' itself, referring to his earlier work he says: 'In that book (with the exception of one chapter) I thought of small communities as independent of things outside of them. In the present chapters there is a very preliminary exploration of one kind of dependent community, that of peasants, as a describable type.'

The reason for employing the conceptual model of little community, which conforms more to the attributes of isolated primitive tribes than to the character of peasant society, for the study of villages of peasant civilization seems to be that when the social scientists were called upon to study the society in countries having peasant civilizations, they did not have with them the conceptual and methodological tools appropriate

for this task. There are examples in many fields, such as architecture, that when people start working on a new material they employ in the beginning the same models and tools which they used for the earlier material.

It appears that after the Second World War when the enhanced economic and political importance of Asia and other such regions came home to world powers like the United States, there was a sudden realization of the need to study the society in the countries of these regions. But adequate conceptual and methodological tools for the study of peasant society were not available, and perhaps from that distance the peasant villages did not look so very different from primitive tribes. Consequently, the social anthropologists tried concepts and methods similar to those that they had developed over the years in their study of tribal society. Redfield's own understanding of the matter is not much different. He observes: 'Today it is usual for an anthropologist to study a community connected with or forming part of a civilization or national state. . . . Nevertheless, habits of work do not at once conform to a newly enlarged subject matter. . . . The isolated, self-contained community remains the abstract image around which social anthropology has formed itself' (1956: 10-11).

In view of the great scientific and practical importance of the study of peasant civilization, it is time that concerted effort is made to evolve appropriate concepts and methods. Obviously, this cannot be achieved at one stroke. We shall have to build bit by bit. For us in India, the first task of course is to study Indian civilization. This is no plea for building an 'Indian sociology'. Friends would recall that in the 1960s when the talk of building an 'Indian Sociology' was much in vogue, I had tried to demolish systematically its possibility (Indra Deva 1967: 71-83). However, I substantially agree with the strong formulation of the need to study Indian tradition and the indispensability of being rooted in Indian social reality put forth by my teacher, Professor D. P. Mukerji, in his address as the President of the First Indian Sociological Conference held at Dehradun in 1955, which I had the privilege to attend.

Attempts at developing an adequate conceptual and methodological framework for the study of peasant civilization must go hand in hand with its substantive study. The task is so stupendous and our knowledge

in this regard is so limited that light from all directions and from all kinds of sources is welcome.

A peasant civilization is made up of the elite and the folk traditions. The two are continually interacting, and shaping each other. There can be many possible ways to study these two strata and traditions and the interaction between them. I have made an attempt to understand the culture of the folk through the analysis of their oral tradition (Indra Deva 1956, 1974, 1989). In collaboration with a Sanskrit scholar, I have also tried to study the genesis, and the twists and turns of the elite tradition in Indian civilization through a close study of traditional texts from the Rigveda to the later *Smritis* (Indra Deva and Shrirama 1980, 1986).

In both these domains further refinement in the techniques of analysis and interpretation is called for. It is also clear that the data yielded by such sources have to be supplemented and corroborated by that derived through other methods and techniques. But I do think that a proper analysis of oral and written texts, in their appropriate socio-cultural context, can give us many insights about subtle aspects and imponderables of society and culture which the prevailing formal techniques are unable to provide.

It is necessary to study peasant civilization in a broad time perspective because the roots of many of the institutions, values and attitudes that exist today lie in the ancient past, and they have acquired their present form through the impact of various socio-cultural forces over the ages. It seems, for instance, that the foundations of the persistent attitude of disdain and suspicion towards women were laid in the early Vedic times (Shrirama Indradeva 1966, 1976).

Just as it is necessary to go into the past, it is important to think of the future also. I do not agree with the view that the task of sociology is merely to smoothen the transition. The sociologist must also consider the question, 'Transition to what kind of society?' If the sociologist does not make serious efforts to answer this question, who else would? Perhaps the politician and the bureaucrat? Generally speaking, the latter are so bogged down by day-to-day problems that they hardly have the time or inclination to take a long-range view of things. Nor do they have the necessary expertise. This in fact is the task of scholars and universities. They can step aside the stream and study and think about things in a broad perspective. Nevertheless, we do come across some laymen who

are very sure of their prescriptions even though their knowledge of the basic structure and processes of society is quite limited. This brings to my mind the wayside medicine-vendor who promises certain cures for all ailments. While a physician or a surgeon who has undergone the grind of protracted medical education hesitates in making a diagnosis or prescribing a remedy, the wayside medicine-vendor or quack wastes no time in handing out a medicine or performing an operation even though he may not know even the elementary anatomy and physiology.

The other alternative is to leave matters to take their own course. In the current vogue of liberalization, *laissez-faire* is once again ascendant. But I think the doctrine of the survival of the fittest is profoundly mistaken. Left to themselves weeds will always overrun the flowerbeds.

I do not mean to say that we the sociologists know for sure the way to a good society. But I do think that it is a part of our job to make explorations in that direction. Some of us may believe that sociology being a science should be value free—it cannot and should not decide what is good or bad. To those among us I would say that as students of the science of society we should at least work out the likely implications of taking various paths of change and development. Even if the final choice is to be made by the people themselves, or by those who have the power to do so, we should bring out various alternatives so that intelligent choice can be made. Although it may not entirely be within the power of anyone to direct the course of change, conscious effort on the part of man can surely exert some influence in giving it a desirable turn.

### POSSIBILITY OF AN ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY SOCIETY AND CULTURE

It is true that the economic, technological and ideological forces that brought about the modernization and industrialization of the countries of Western Europe and North America have by and large made a devastating impact on the ecological balance of our planet. It also seems true that the character of the society and culture that have come into being as a result of the working of those forces continues to be damaging to the environment. However, the technological and ideological forces of today are not the same as they were in the 18th and 19th centuries. The

nature of these forces seems to have undergone a basic change in many ways. At the same time the developing countries of today even now have vigorous folk traditions which possess enough vitality to imbibe new elements; and the peculiar cross-currents of contemporary social change have brought these traditions face to face with modern forces which have reached great maturity. Thus the stage is set for the ushering in of a new civilization which need not be a mere artificial synthesis but may possess emergent qualities.

In the 18th and 19th centuries when coal was the only source of power, industries had to be inevitably concentrated around coal mines; because carrying coal is costly and cumbersome. This gave rise to gigantic industrial centres with monstrously large factories which emitted vast quantities of pollutants that poisoned the environment. The villages were reduced to suppliers of cheap uprooted labour and raw materials, and were turned into markets for insipid goods of mass production. This is not unavoidable now. New sources of power such as electricity, not to mention renewable energy sources like sun and wind, can be taken to villages and small-sized but efficient industries can be set up there itself. These industries need not employ outmoded technology. On the contrary they can make good use of the most sophisticated technological developments, like those in the field of electronics, which have made possible reduction in the size of machines to an unprecedented degree. In view of the scarcity of capital and abundance of labour, it will be far more economical to keep the machines labour-intensive.

The technology that would make possible such dispersal of small and efficient machines may not exist at present but the accumulated fund of scientific and technological knowledge that humanity possesses today has brought it within our reach. However, it is countries like India which have to develop it. If a serious effort is made, this is not beyond our capabilities. We must give up the habit of importing finished technology in all spheres, considering 'high technology' or the 'latest technology' as a goal by itself. After all, technology belongs to the order of means. It cannot be an end in itself. Technology must suit our proportions of labour and capital, and it must be appropriate for the use to which we wish to put it.



Thus it would no longer be necessary to uproot people from the countryside on a large scale to bring about industrialization. The settled life of the folk in which there is traditionally a balance between agriculture and industry can be given a new dimension by imaginative use of the most sophisticated technology for human ends.

The ideological elements too are not so hostile now to the folk way of life as they were in the early phase of modernity. The limitations of rationalism are widely recognized. Numerous ideological movements emphasize the value of cooperation and security. This is not to say that the modern elite are returning to the values of the folk communities. They, however, do not harbour that self-righteous indignation which impelled their predecessors to combat and suppress traditional folk values. Under these changed material and ideological circumstances, it is not impossible that folk forms find certain new avenues of survival and growth. Of course, we cannot expect them to remain just as they have been traditionally. They will have to raise themselves to a new level by interacting with contemporary modern elements.

The idea that when we talk about underdeveloped countries it should suffice to make use of the older concepts is specious. In fact some of the 'underdeveloped' societies of today may be more receptive to the end-of-the-twentieth-century valuational, institutional and technological patterns than they would be to those which arose in the 18th and 19th centuries. In matters of such receptivity they may show a higher propensity than those societies which broke away from medievalism earlier.

It may be pointed out, for instance, that even though today the limitations of individualism, activism and unlimited acquisitiveness are recognized by perceptive thinkers in the industrialized societies also, the countries of Western Europe and North America which have been able to build up a high level of prosperity on the basis of these, find it extremely difficult to give them up or even to restrict them within reasonable limits. These values, and the institutional and cultural elements based on them, have entrenched themselves so much that it is difficult to dislodge them. On the contrary, in the traditional societies these 18th and 19th century values have not yet found a strong foothold. They can, therefore, be more easily replaced by the institutional and

attitudinal patterns based on ideas of cooperation, security and collective good.

Besides the transformation of the forces of modernization, the pace and patterns of socio-cultural change in the developing countries also seem to strengthen the chances of emergence of new syntheses. The tremendous pace of change naturally leads to much overlapping. Long before one cultural era has declined or vanished, a number of successive forms enter the stage. The contemporaneity of cultural and valuational elements that are historically non-contemporaneous creates serious problems for groups as well as individuals. But it also seems to open up possibilities of unprecedented combinations and emergence of new patterns.

In the light of the above analysis it is clear that we find today in the developing countries a constellation of forces which seems to be altogether new. The highly sophisticated and mellowed down forces of contemporary modernism are interacting with tribal and folk traditions which have vigour enough to combine with new elements and bring forth new forms.

Only the future can tell whether the tribal and folk traditions will really be able to attain a new level by harnessing the technological, economic and ideological resources made available by the closing decades of the 20th century. A number of factors, however, exist which should deter us from rejecting such a possibility out of hand. The peculiar patterns of social change, with considerable overlapping of different cultural eras, have brought vigorous tribal and folk traditions in close proximity to modern forces which are no more so hostile but may even facilitate their growth relying on their own roots. These societies may, therefore, chart out a new course in their march towards socio-cultural forms which will be far more environment-friendly.

It is not necessary for us to agree with the unilinear view that all cultures must necessarily pass through the same successive stages of evolution. The long strides of socio-economic change in the developing countries of today may permit the skipping of some of the earlier steps of large-scale industrialization. These countries face a unique challenge and it is not impossible that this may evoke a magnificent response and lead to the growth of a new socio-cultural pattern.

Such a development appears to be desirable also. Large-scale industrialization based on individualistic acquisitiveness has led to various maladies such as alienation of work from life, schism between utility and beauty, commercialization of leisure and recreation, sapping of aesthetic sensibility from everyday life, uprootedness, and the creation of human ant-hills in the form of gigantic urban centres swarming with a variety of problems. Tribal and folk cultures on the contrary are marked by a balance between beauty and utility. For the folk craftsman, work is not alienated from life and the object produced by him has both utilitarian and aesthetic aspects. In tribal and folk society the artist is not a special kind of man; every man is a special kind of artist. Almost everyone sings (not merely listens) and artistic expressions like singing and poetry are not put on a separate niche. They accompany work and socially significant ritual. Though it would be impossible and also undesirable to try to preserve folk and tribal cultures just as they have been, it is necessary to work out the possibility of developing those of their aspects which are of abiding value to man. This would also make for cultural diversity; and cultural diversity is no less important than bio-diversity.

If the developing countries of today succeed in building up such a pattern they may achieve an environment-friendly society which many sensitive thinkers in the most advanced countries earnestly cherish. In this sense, the countries which have lagged behind may be able to take a step which has been eluding the more advanced ones. This may look rather surprising but such turns in the course of social change are not unknown to history. In fact I have ventured to put forward elsewhere a general hypothesis to this effect (Indra Deva 1966). This general hypothesis about the course of social change has received considerable attention from noted sociologists like Lazarsfeld (1970: 87) and it seems applicable also to the prospects of growth of an environment-friendly culture.

I have been thinking about this possibility for the last twenty-five years and more; but how can I be sure that this would indeed materialize. I am no prophet to forecast the dawn of a new civilization. Yet I do think that our search for alternatives must continue. I do not believe that the task of sociology is confined to hastening the pace of transition to a type of society which has a self-generating propensity to attain higher and

higher levels of alienation, anomie, insecurity, anxiety, conflict, crime, and devastation of environment.

To some of us such ideas may look too romantic. I would only submit that many ideas tend to appear romantic till they are put into action. To some people the idea of having a democratic system of government could have appeared romantic before such governments came into being. To me even the idea of drawing carriages by the power of steam, just because steam could dislodge for a while the lid of a kettle, would have surely looked romantic if the railway trains run by steam had not come into being already.

But even if some of us do not think that it is feasible to have such a society, I would still plead that the quest for new possibilities both for the society and for the social sciences, should not be given up. What is, and what has been, is of course very important to study. But this study should also help us to explore what will be and what can be. And for making such explorations, a broad perspective of time and space is essential. There are infinite possibilities, out of which only a few materialize. As the great poet Ghalib said:

*Not all, only a few have found expression  
as poppies and roses,  
What may be the forms that lie concealed  
under the dust?*

Let us strive to discover these dormant possibilities.

#### REFERENCES

- Foster, George M. 1953. 'What is Folk Culture?', *American Anthropologist*, 55 (2): 159-73.
- Indra Deva. 1956. 'Modern Social Forces in Indian Folk-Songs', *Diogenes*, (15): 48-64.
- . 1966. 'The Course of Social Change: A Hypothesis', *Diogenes*, (56): 74-91.
- . 1967. 'Possibility of an "Indian Sociology"', in T. K. N. Unnithan, et al. (eds), *Sociology for India*, pp. 71-83. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.
- . 1974. 'Oral Tradition and the Study of Peasant Society', *Diogenes*, (85): 112-27.
- . 1989. *Folk Culture and Peasant Society in India*. Jaipur: Rawat.
- Indra Deva and Shrirama. 1980. *Growth of Legal System in Indian Society*. New Delhi: ICSSR/Allied Publishers.
- . 1986. *Traditional Values and Institutions in Indian Society*. New Delhi: S. Chand.

- Lazarsfeld, Paul F. 1970. 'Sociology', in *Main Trends of Research in Social and Human Sciences*, I: 61-165. Paris/The Hague: Unesco/Mouton.
- Redfield, Robert. 1955. *The Little Community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1956. *Peasant Society and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shrirama Indradeva. 1966. 'Correspondence between Women and Nature in Indian Thought', *Philosophy East and West*, 26 (3-4): 161-68.
- . 1976. 'Status of Women in Ancient India', *Diogenes*, (93): 67-80.
- Sorokin, P. A., C. C. Zimmerman and C. J. Galpin. 1931. *A Systematic Sourcebook in Rural Sociology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Vogel, J. Ph. 1926. *Indian Serpent Lore*. London.

# EUROCENTRISM AND ITS AVATARS: THE DILEMMAS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Immanuel Wallerstein

Social Science has been Eurocentric throughout its institutional history, which means since the time that there have been departments teaching social science within university systems. This is not in the least surprising. Social science is a product of the modern world-system, and Eurocentrism is constitutive of the geoculture of the modern world. Furthermore, as an institutional structure, social science originated largely in Europe. We shall be using Europe here more as a cultural than as a cartographical expression; in this sense, in the discussion about the last two centuries, we are referring primarily and jointly to Western Europe and North America. The social science disciplines were in fact overwhelmingly located, at least up to 1945, in just five countries—France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and the United States. Even today, despite the global spread of social science as an activity, the large majority of social scientists worldwide remain Europeans. Social science emerged in response to European problems, at a point in history when Europe dominated the whole world-system. It was virtually inevitable that its choice of subject matter, its theorizing, its methodology, and its epistemology should reflect the constraints of the crucible within which it was born.

However, in the period since 1945, the decolonization of Asia and Africa, plus the sharply accentuated political consciousness of the non-European world everywhere, has affected the world of knowledge just as much as it has affected the politics of the world-system. One major such difference, today and indeed for some thirty years now at least, is that the 'Eurocentrism' of social science has been under severe

---

Immanuel Wallerstein is on the faculty of Fernand Braudel Center, Binghamton University, Binghamton, New York, N. Y. 13902-6000. He is also the president of the International Sociological Association.

---

SOCIOLOGICAL BULLETIN, 46 (1), March 1997

KP-693

attack. The attack is of course fundamentally justified, and there is no question that, if social science is to make any progress in the 21st century, it must overcome the Eurocentric heritage which has distorted its analyses and its capacity to deal with the problems of the contemporary world. If, however, we are to do this, we must take a careful look at what constitutes Eurocentrism, for, as we shall see, it is a hydra-headed monster and has many *avatars*. It will not be easy to slaughter the dragon swiftly. Indeed, if we are not careful, in the guise of trying to fight it, we may in fact criticize Eurocentrism using Eurocentric premises and thereby reinforce its hold on the community of scholars.

## I

There are at least five different ways in which social science has been said to be Eurocentric. These do not constitute a logically tight set of categories, since they overlap in unclear ways. Still, it might be useful to review the allegations under each heading. It has been argued that social science expresses its Eurocentrism in (1) its historiography, (2) the parochiality of its universalism, (3) its assumptions about (Western) civilization, (4) its Orientalism, and (5) its attempts to impose the theory of progress.

### **Historiography**

This is the explanation of European dominance of the modern world by virtue of specific European historical achievements. The historiography is probably fundamental to the other explanations, but it is also the most obviously naive variant and the one whose validity is most easily put in question. Europeans in the last two centuries have unquestionably sat on top of the world. Collectively, they have controlled the wealthiest and militarily most powerful countries. They have enjoyed the most advanced technology and were the primary creators of this advanced technology. These facts seem largely uncontested, and are indeed hard to contest plausibly. The issue is: what explains this differential in power and standard of living with the rest of the world? One kind of answer is that Europeans have done something meritorious and different from peoples in other parts of the world. This is what is meant by scholars who speak of the 'European miracle' (e.g. Jones 1981). Europeans have

launched the industrial revolution or sustained growth, or they have launched modernity, or capitalism, or bureaucratization, or individual liberty. Of course, we shall need then to define these terms rather carefully and discover whether it was really Europeans who launched whatever each of these novelties are supposed to be, and if so exactly when.

But even if we agree on the definition and the timing, and therefore so to speak on the reality of the phenomenon, we have actually explained very little. For we must then explain why it is that Europeans, and not others, launched the specified phenomenon, and why they did so at a certain moment of history. In seeking such explanations, the instinct of most scholars has been to push us back in history to presumed antecedents. If Europeans in the 18th or 16th century did x, it is said to be probably because their ancestors (or attributed ancestors, for the ancestry may be less biological than cultural, or assertedly cultural) did, or were, y in the 11th century, or in the 5th century B.C. or even further back. We can all think of the multiple explanations that, once having established or at least asserted some phenomenon that has occurred in the 16th to 19th centuries, proceed to push us back to various earlier points in European ancestry for the truly determinant variable.

There is a premise here that is not really hidden, but was for a long time undebated. The premise is that whatever is the novelty for which Europe is held responsible in the 16th to 19th centuries, this novelty is a good thing, something of which Europe should be proud, something of which the rest of the world should be envious, or at least appreciative. This novelty is perceived as an achievement, and numerous book titles bear testimony to this kind of evaluation.

There seems to me little question that the actual historiography of world social science has expressed such a perception of reality to a very large degree. This perception of course can be challenged on various grounds, and this has been increasingly the case in recent decades. One can challenge the accuracy of the picture of what happened, within Europe and in the world as a whole in the 16th to 19th centuries. One can certainly challenge the plausibility of the presumed cultural antecedents of what happened in this period. One can implant the story of the 16th to 19th centuries in a longer duration, from several centuries longer to tens of thousands of years. If one does that, one is usually



arguing that the European 'achievements' of the 16th to the 19th centuries thereby seem less remarkable, or more like a cyclical variant, or less like achievements that can be credited primarily to Europe. Finally, one can accept that the novelties were real, but argue that they were less a positive than a negative accomplishment.

This kind of revisionist historiography is often persuasive in detail, and certainly tends to be cumulative. At a certain point, the debunking, or deconstructing, may become pervasive, and perhaps a counter-theory can take hold. This is, for example, what seems to be happening (or has already happened) with the historiography of the French Revolution, where the so-called social interpretation that had dominated the literature for at least a century and a half was challenged and then to some degree toppled in the last thirty years. We are probably entering into such a so-called paradigmatic shift right now in the basic historiography of modernity.

Whenever such a shift happens, however, we ought to take a deep breath, step back, and evaluate whether the alternative hypotheses are indeed more plausible, and most of all whether they really break with the crucial underlying premises of the formerly dominant hypotheses. This is the question I wish to raise in relation to the historiography of European presumed achievements in the modern world. It is under assault. What is being proposed as a replacement? And how different is this replacement? Before, however, we can tackle this larger question, we must review some of the other critiques of Eurocentrism.

### **Universalism**

Universalism is the view that there exist scientific truths that are valid across all of time and space. European thought of the last few centuries has been strongly universalist for the most part. This was the era of the cultural triumph of science as a knowledge activity. Science displaced philosophy as the prestige mode of knowledge and the arbiter of social discourse. The science of which we are talking is Newtonian-Cartesian science. Its premises were that the world was governed by determinist laws taking the form of linear equilibria processes, and that, by stating such laws as universal reversible equations, we only needed knowledge in addition to some set of initial conditions to permit us to predict the state of the system at any future or past time.

What this meant for social knowledge seemed clear. Social scientists might discover the universal processes that explain human behaviour, and whatever hypotheses they could verify were thought to hold across time and space, or were to be stated in ways such that they hold true across time and space. The persona of the scholar was irrelevant, since scholars were operating as value-neutral analysts. And the locus of the empirical evidence could be essentially ignored, provided the data were handled correctly, since the processes were thought to be constant. The consequences were not too different, however, in the case of those scholars whose approach was more historical and idiographic, as long as one assumed the existence of an underlying model of historical development. All stage theories (whether of Comte or Spencer or Marx, to choose only a few names from a long list) were primarily theorizations of what has been called the Whig interpretation of history, the presumption that the present is the best time ever and that the past led inevitably to the present. And even very empiricist historical writing, however much it proclaimed abhorrence of theorizing, tended nonetheless to reflect subconsciously an underlying stage theory.

Whether in the ahistorical time-reversible form of the nomothetic social scientists or the diachronic stage theory form of the historians, European social science was resolutely universalist in asserting that whatever it was that happened in Europe in the 16th to 19th centuries represented a pattern that was applicable everywhere, either because it was a progressive achievement of mankind which was irreversible or because it represented the fulfillment of humanity's basic needs via the removal of artificial obstacles to this realization. What you saw now in Europe was not only good but the face of the future everywhere.

Universalizing theories have always come under attack on the grounds that the particular situation in a particular time and place did not seem to fit the model. There have also always been scholars who argued that universal generalizations were intrinsically impossible. But in the last thirty years a third kind of attack has been made against the universalizing theories of modern social science. It has been argued that these allegedly universal theories are not in fact universal, but rather a presentation of the Western historical pattern as though it were universal. Joseph Needham quite some time ago designated as the 'fundamental error of Eurocentrism . . . the tacit postulate that modern

science and technology, which in fact took root in Renaissance Europe, is universal and that it follows that all that is European is' (cited in Abdel-Malek 1981: 89).

Social science thus has been accused of being Eurocentric insofar as it was particularistic. More than Eurocentric, it was said to be highly parochial. This hurt to the quick, since modern social science prided itself specifically on having risen above the parochial. To the degree that this charge seemed reasonable, it was far more telling than merely asserting that the universal propositions had not yet been formulated in a way that could account for every case.

### Civilization

Civilization refers to a set of social characteristics that are contrasted with primitiveness or barbarism. Modern Europe considered itself to be more than merely one 'civilization' among several; it considered itself (uniquely or at least especially) 'civilized'. What characterized this state of being civilized is not something on which there has been an obvious consensus, even among Europeans. For some, civilization was encompassed in 'modernity', that is, in the advance of technology and the rise of productivity as well as the cultural belief in the existence of historic development and progress. For others, civilization meant the increased autonomy of the 'individual' *vis-a-vis* all other social actors—the family, the community, the state, the religious institutions. For others, civilization meant non-brutal behaviour in everyday life, social manners in the broadest sense. And for still others, civilization meant the decline or narrowing of the scope of legitimate violence and the broadening of the definition of cruelty. And of course, for many, civilization involved several or all of these traits in combination.

When French colonizers in the 19th century spoke of *la mission civilisatrice*, they meant that, by means of colonial conquest, France (or more generally Europe) would impose upon non-European peoples the values and norms that were encompassed by these definitions of civilization. When, in the 1990s, various groups in Western countries speak of the 'right to interfere' in political situations in various parts of the world, but almost always in non-Western parts of the world, it is in the name of such values of civilization that they are asserting such a right.

This set of values, however we prefer to designate them—civilized values, secular-humanist values—modern values permeate social science, as one might expect, since social science is a product of the same historical system that has elevated these values to the pinnacle of a hierarchy. Social scientists have incorporated such values in their definitions of the problems (the social problems, the intellectual problems) they consider worth pursuing. They have incorporated these values into the concepts they have invented with which to analyse the problems, and into the indicators they utilize to measure the concepts. Social scientists no doubt have insisted, for the most part, that they were seeking to be value-free, insofar as they claimed they were not intentionally misreading or distorting the data because of their socio-political preferences. But to be value-free in this sense does not at all mean that values, in the sense of decisions about the historical significance of observed phenomena, are absent. This is of course the central argument of Heinrich Rickert (1913) about the logical specificity of what he calls the ‘cultural sciences’. They are unable to ignore ‘values’ in the sense of assessing social significance.

To be sure, the Western and social scientific presumptions about ‘civilization’ were not entirely impervious to the concept of the multiplicity of ‘civilizations’. Whenever one posed the question of the origin of civilized values, how it was that they have appeared originally (or so it was argued) in the modern Western world, the answer almost inevitably was that they were the products of long-standing and unique trends in the past of the Western world—alternatively described as the heritage of Antiquity and/or of the Christian Middle Ages, the heritage of the Hebrew world, or the combined heritage of the two, the latter sometimes renamed and respecified as the Judeo-Christian heritage.

Many objections can and have been made to the set of successive presumptions. Whether the modern world, or the modern European world, is civilized in the very way the word is used in European discourse has been challenged. There is the notable quip of Mahatma Gandhi who, when asked, ‘Mr. Gandhi, what do you think of Western civilization?’, responded, ‘It would be a good idea.’ In addition, the assertion that the values of ancient Greece and Rome or of ancient Israel were more conducive to laying the base for these so-called modern values than were the values of other ancient civilizations has also been

contested. And finally whether modern Europe can plausibly claim either Greece and Rome on the one hand or ancient Israel on the other as its civilizational foreground is not at all self-evident. Indeed, there has long been a debate between those who have seen Greece or Israel as alternative cultural origins. Each side of this debate has denied the plausibility of the alternative. This debate itself casts doubt on the plausibility of the derivation.

In any case, who would argue that Japan can claim ancient Indic civilizations as its forerunner on the grounds that they were the place of origin of Buddhism, which has become a central part of Japan's cultural history? Is the contemporary United States closer culturally to ancient Greece, Rome, or Israel than Japan is to Indic civilization? One could after all make the case that Christianity, far from representing continuity, marked a decisive break with Greece, Rome, and Israel. Indeed Christians, up to the Renaissance, made precisely this argument. And is not the break with Antiquity still today part of the doctrine of Christian churches?

However, today, the sphere in which the argument about values has come to the fore is the political sphere. Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia has been very specific in arguing that Asian countries can and should 'modernize' without accepting some or all of the values of European civilization. And his views have been widely echoed by other Asian political leaders. The 'values' debate has also become central within European countries themselves, especially (but not only) within the United States, as a debate about 'multiculturalism'. This version of the current debate has indeed had a major impact on institutionalized social science, with the blossoming of structures within the university which have brought together scholars who deny the premise of the singularity of 'civilization'.

### **Orientalism**

Orientalism refers to a stylized and abstracted statement of the characteristics of non-Western civilizations. It is the obverse of the concept 'civilization', and has become a major theme in public discussion since the writings of Anouar Abdel-Malek (1972 [1981]) and Edward Said (1978). Orientalism was not too long ago a badge of honour (see Smith 1956). Orientalism is a mode of knowledge that

claims roots in the European Middle Ages, when some intellectual Christian monks set themselves the task of understanding better non-Christian religions, by learning their languages and reading carefully their religious texts. Of course, they based themselves on the premise of the truth of Christian faith and the desirability of converting the pagans, but nonetheless they took these texts seriously as expressions, however perverted, of human culture.

When Orientalism was secularized in the 19th century, the form of the activity was not very different. Orientalists continued to learn the languages and decipher the texts. In the process, they continued to depend upon a binary view of the social world. In partial place of the Christian/pagan distinction, they placed the Western/Oriental, or modern/non-modern distinction. In the social sciences, there emerged a long line of famous polarities: military and industrial societies, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, mechanical and organic solidarity, traditional and rational-legal legitimation, statics and dynamics. Though these polarities were not usually directly related to the literature on Orientalism, we should not forget that one of the earliest of these polarities was Maine's status and contract, and it was explicitly based on a comparison of Hindu and English legal system.

Orientalists saw themselves as persons who diligently expressed their sympathetic appreciation of a non-Western civilization by devoting their lives to erudite study of texts in order to understand (*verstehen*) the culture. The culture that they understood in this fashion was of course a construct, a social construct by someone coming from a different culture. It is the validity of these constructs that has come under attack, at three different levels: it is said that the concepts do not fit the empirical reality; that they abstract too much and thus erase empirical variety; and that they are extrapolations of European prejudices.

The attack against Orientalism was however more than an attack on poor scholarship. It was also a critique of the political consequences of such social science concepts. Orientalism was said to legitimate the dominant power position of Europe, indeed to play a primary role in the ideological carapace of Europe's imperial role within the framework of the modern world-system. The attack on Orientalism has become tied to the general attack on reification, and allied to the multiple efforts to deconstruct social science narratives. Indeed, it has been argued that

some non-Western attempts to create a counter-discourse of 'Occidentalism', for example, and 'all elite discourses of anti-traditionalism in modern China, from the May Fourth movement to the 1989 Tianenmen student demonstration, have been extensively orientalized,' (Chen 1992: 687), therein sustaining rather than undermining Orientalism.

### **Progress**

Progress, its reality, its inevitability, was a basic theme of the European Enlightenment. Some would trace it back through all of Western philosophy (Bury 1920, Nisbet 1980). In any case, it became the consensus viewpoint of 19th century Europe (and indeed remained so for most of the 20th century as well). Social science, as it was constructed, was deeply imprinted with the theory of progress.

Progress became the underlying explanation of the history of the world, and the rationale of almost all stage theories. Even more, it became the motor of all of applied social science. We were said to study social science in order better to understand the social world, because then we could more wisely and more surely accelerate progress everywhere (or at least help remove impediments in its path). The metaphors of evolution or of development were not merely attempts to describe; they were also incentives to prescribe. Social science became the advisor to (handmaiden of?) policy-makers from Bentham's panopticon to the Verein fur Sozialpolitik, to the Beveridge Report and endless other governmental commissions, to Unesco's postwar series on racism, to the successive researches of James Coleman on the U. S. educational system. After the Second World War, the 'development of underdeveloped countries' was a rubric which justified the involvement of social scientists of all political persuasions in the social and political reorganization of the non-Western world.

Progress was not merely assumed or analysed; it was imposed as well. This is perhaps not so different from the attitudes we discussed under the heading of 'civilization'. What needs to be underlined here is that, at the time when 'civilization' began to be a category that had lost its innocence and attracted suspicions (primarily after 1945), 'progress' as a category survived and was more than adequate to replace

'civilization', smelling somewhat prettier. The idea of progress seemed to serve as the last redoubt of Eurocentrism, the fallback position.

The idea of progress of course has always had conservative critics, although the vigour of their resistance could be said to have declined dramatically in the 1850-1950 period. But since at least 1968 the critics of the idea of progress have burst forth anew, with renewed vigour among the conservatives, and with newly-discovered faith on the left. There are however many different ways in which one can attack the idea of progress. One can suggest that what has been called progress is a false progress, but that a true progress exists, arguing that Europe's version was a delusion or an attempt to delude. Or one can suggest that there can be no such thing as progress, because of 'original sin' or the eternal cycle of humanity. Or one can suggest that Europe has indeed known progress but that it is now trying to keep the fruits of progress from the rest of the world, as some non-Western critics of the ecology movement have argued.

What is clear, however, is that for many the idea of progress has become labeled as a European idea, and hence has been included in the attack on Eurocentrism. This attack is often, however, rendered contradictory by the efforts of other non-Westerners to appropriate progress for part or all of the non-Western world, pushing Europe out of the picture, but not progress.

## II

The multiple forms of Eurocentrism and the multiple forms of the critique of Eurocentrism do not necessarily add up to a coherent picture. What we might do is try to assess the central debate. Institutionalized social science started as an activity in Europe, as we have noted. It has been charged with painting a false picture of social reality by misreading, grossly exaggerating, and/or distorting the historical role of Europe, particularly its historical role in the modern world.

The critics fundamentally make, however, three different (and somewhat contradictory) kinds of claims. The first is that whatever it is that Europe did, other civilizations were also in the process of doing it, up to the moment that Europe used its geopolitical power to interrupt the process in other parts of the world. The second is that whatever Europe



did is nothing more than a continuation of what others had already been doing for a long time, with the Europeans temporarily coming to the foreground. The third is that whatever Europe did has been analysed incorrectly and subjected to inappropriate extrapolations, which have had dangerous consequences for both science and the political world. The first two arguments, widely offered, seem to me to suffer from what I would term 'anti-Eurocentric Eurocentrism'. The third argument seems to me to be undoubtedly correct, and deserves our full attention. What kind of curious animal could 'anti-Eurocentric Eurocentrism' be? Let us take each of these arguments in turn.

There have been throughout the 20th century persons who have argued that, within the framework of say Chinese, or Indian, or Arab-Muslim 'civilization', there existed both the cultural foundations and the socio-historical pattern of development that would have led to the emergence of full-fledged modern capitalism, or indeed was in the process of leading in that direction. In the case of Japan, the argument is often even stronger, asserting that modern capitalism did develop there, separately but temporally coincident with its development in Europe. The heart of most of these arguments is a stage theory of development (frequently its Marxist variant), from which it logically followed that different parts of the world were all on parallel roads to modernity or capitalism. This form of argument presumed both the distinctiveness and social autonomy of the various civilizational regions of the world on the one hand and their common subordination to an overarching pattern on the other.

Since almost all the various arguments of this kind are specific to a given cultural zone and its historical development, it would be a massive exercise to discuss the historical plausibility of the case of each civilizational zone under discussion. I do not propose to do so here. What I would point out is one logical limitation to this line of argument, whatever the region under discussion, and one general intellectual consequence. The logical limitation is very obvious. Even if it is true that various other parts of the world were going down the road to modernity/capitalism, perhaps were even far along this road, this still leaves us with the problem of accounting for the fact that it was the West, or Europe, that reached there first, and was consequently able to

'conquer the world'. At this point, we are back to the question as originally posed, why modernity/capitalism in the West?

Of course, today there are some who are denying that Europe in a deep sense did conquer the world on the grounds that there has always been resistance, but this seems to me to be stretching our reading of reality. There was after all real colonial conquest that covered a large portion of the globe. There are after all real military indicators of European strength. No doubt there were always multiple forms of resistance, both active and passive, but if the resistance were truly so formidable, there would be nothing for us to discuss today. If we insist too much on non-European agency as a theme, we end up whitewashing all of Europe's sins, or at least most of them. This seems to me not what the critics were intending.

In any case, however temporary we deem Europe's domination to be, we still need to explain it. Most of the critics pursuing this line of argument are more interested in explaining how Europe interrupted an indigenous process in their part of the world than in explaining how it was that Europe was able to do this. Even more to the point, by attempting to diminish Europe's credit for this deed, this presumed 'achievement', they reinforce the theme that it was an achievement. The theory makes Europe into an 'evil hero'—no doubt evil, but also no doubt a hero in the dramatic sense of the term, for it was Europe that made the final spurt in the race and crossed the finish line first. And worse still, there is the implication, not too far beneath the surface, that, given half a chance, Chinese, or Indians, or Arabs not only could have, but would have, done the same—that is, launch modernity/capitalism, conquer the world, exploit resources and people, and play themselves the role of evil hero.

This view of modern history seems to be very Eurocentric in its anti-Eurocentrism, because it accepts the significance (that is, the value) of the European 'achievement' in precisely the terms that Europe has defined it, and merely asserts that others could have done it too, or were doing it too. For some possibly accidental reason, Europe got a temporary edge on the others and interfered with their development forcibly. The assertion that the others could have been Europeans too seems to me a very feeble way of opposing Eurocentrism, and actually

reinforces the worst consequences of Eurocentric thought for social knowledge.

The second line of opposition to Eurocentric analyses denies that there is anything really new in what Europe did. This line of argument starts by pointing out that, as of the late Middle Ages, and indeed for a long time before that, Western Europe was a marginal (peripheral) area of the Eurasian continent, whose historical role and cultural achievements were below the level of various other parts of the world (such as the Arab world or China). This is undoubtedly true, at least as a first-level generalization. A quick jump is then made to situating modern Europe within the construction of an ecumene or world structure that has been in creation for several thousand years (see various authors in Sanderson 1995). This is not implausible, but the systemic meaningfulness of this ecumene has yet to be established, in my view. We then come to the third element in the sequence. It is said to follow from the prior marginality of Western Europe and the millennial construction of a Eurasian world ecumene that whatever happened in Western Europe was nothing special and simply one more variant in the historical construction of a singular system.

This latter argument seems to me conceptually and historically very wrong. I do not intend however to reargue this case (see Wallerstein 1992a). I wish merely to underline the ways in which this is anti-Eurocentric Eurocentrism. Logically, it requires arguing that capitalism is nothing new, and indeed some of those who argue the continuity of the development of the Eurasian ecumene have explicitly taken this position. Unlike the position of those who are arguing that a given other civilization was also en route to capitalism when Europe interfered with this process, the argument here is that we were all of us doing this together, and that there was no real development towards capitalism because the whole world (or at least the whole Eurasian ecumene) was always capitalist in some sense for several thousand years.

Let me point out first of all that this is the classic position of the liberal economists. This is not really different from Adam Smith arguing that there exists a 'propensity [in human nature] to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another' (1937 [1776]: 13). It eliminates essential differences between different historical systems. If the Chinese, the

Egyptians, and the West Europeans have all been doing the same thing historically, in what sense are they different civilizations, or different historical systems? (per contra, see Amin 1991). In eliminating credit to Europe, is there any credit left to anyone except to pan-humanity?

But again worst of all, by appropriating what modern Europe did for the balance-sheet of the Eurasian ecumene, we are accepting the essential ideological argument of Eurocentrism, that modernity (or capitalism) is miraculous, and wonderful, and merely adding that everyone has always been doing it in one way or another. By denying European credit, we deny European blame. What is so terrible about Europe's 'conquest of the world' if it is nothing but the latest part of the ongoing march of the ecumene? Far from being a form of argument that is critical of Europe, it implies applause that Europe, having been a 'marginal' part of the ecumene, at last learned the wisdom of the others (and elders) and applied it successfully.

And the unspoken clincher follows inevitably. If the Eurasian ecumene has been following a single thread for thousands of years, and the capitalist world-system is nothing new, then what possible argument is there that would indicate that this thread will not continue forever, or at least for an indefinitely long time? If capitalism did not begin in the 16th (or the 18th) century, it is surely not about to end in the twenty-first. Personally, I simply do not believe this, and I have made the case in several recent writings (Wallerstein 1995; Hopkins and Wallerstein 1996). My main point, however, is that this line of argument is in no way anti-Eurocentric; since it accepts the basic set of values that have been put forward by Europe in its period of world dominance, and thereby in fact denies and/or undermines competing value systems that were, or are, in honour in other parts of the world.

I think we have to find sounder bases for being against Eurocentrism in social science, and sounder ways of pursuing this objective. For the third form of criticism—that whatever Europe did has been analysed incorrectly and subjected to inappropriate extrapolations, which have had dangerous consequences for both science and the political world—is indeed true. I think we have to start with questioning the assumption that what Europe did was a positive achievement. I think we have to engage ourselves in making a careful balance-sheet of what has been accomplished by capitalist civilization during its historical life, and

assess whether the pluses are indeed greater than the minuses. This is something I tried once, and I encourage others to do the same (see Wallerstein 1992b). My own balance-sheet is negative overall, and therefore I do not consider the capitalist system to have been evidence of human progress. Rather, I consider it to have been the consequence of a breakdown in the historic barriers against this particular version of an exploitative system. I consider that the fact that China, India, the Arab world and other regions did not go forward to capitalism evidence that they were better immunized against the toxin, and to their historic credit. To turn their credit into something which they must explain away is to me the quintessential form of Eurocentrism.

Let me be clear. I believe that, in all major historical systems ('civilizations'), there have always been a certain degree of commodification and hence of commercialization. As a consequence, there have always been persons who sought profits in the market. But there is a world of difference between a historical system in which there exist some entrepreneurs or merchants or 'capitalists' and one in which the capitalist ethos and practice is dominant. Prior to the modern world system, what happened in each of these other historical systems is that whenever capitalist strata got too wealthy or too successful or too intrusive on existing institutions, other institutional groups (cultural, religious, military, political) attacked them, utilizing both their substantial power and their value-systems to assert the need to restrain and contain the profit-oriented strata. As a result, these strata were frustrated in their attempts to impose their practices on the historical system as a priority. They were often crudely and rudely stripped of accumulated capital, and in any case made to give obeisance to values and practices that inhibited them. This is what I mean by the anti-toxins that contained the virus.

What happened in the Western world is that, for a specific set of reasons that were momentary (or conjunctural, or accidental), the anti-toxins were less available or less efficacious, and the virus spread rapidly, and then proved itself invulnerable to later attempts at reversing its effects. The European world-economy of the 16th century became irremediably capitalist. And once capitalism consolidated itself in this historical system, once this system was governed by the priority of the ceaseless accumulation of capital, it acquired a kind of strength *vis-a-vis*

other historical systems that enabled it to expand geographically until it absorbed physically the entire globe, the first historical system ever to achieve this kind of total expansion.

The fact that capitalism had this kind of breakthrough in the European arena, and then expanded to cover the globe, does not however mean that this was inevitable, or desirable, or in any sense progressive. In my view, it was none of these. And an anti-Eurocentric point of view must start by asserting this.

I would prefer, therefore, to reconsider what is not universalist in the universalist doctrines that have emerged from the historical system that is capitalist, our modern world-system. The modern world-system has developed structures of knowledge that are significantly different from previous structures of knowledge. It is often said that what is different is the development of scientific thought. But it seems clear that this is not true, however splendid modern scientific advances are. Scientific thought long antedates the modern world, and is present in all major civilizational zones. This has been magistrally demonstrated for China in the corpus of work that Joseph Needham launched (Needham 1954).

What is specific to the structures of knowledge in the modern world-system is the concept of the 'two cultures'. No other historical system has instituted a fundamental divorce between science and philosophy/humanities, or what I think would be better characterized as the separation of the quest for the true and the quest for the good and the beautiful. Indeed, it was not all that easy to enshrine this divorce within the geoculture of the modern world-system. It took three centuries before the split was institutionalized. Today, however, it is fundamental to the geoculture, and forms the basis of our university systems.

This conceptual split has enabled the modern world to put forward the bizarre concept of the value-neutral specialist, whose objective assessments of reality could form the basis not merely of engineering decisions (in the broadest sense of the term) but of socio-political choices as well. Shielding the scientists from collective assessment, and in effect merging them into the category of technocrats, did liberate scientists from the dead hand of intellectually irrelevant authority. But simultaneously, it removed them from the major underlying social decisions we have been taking for the last 500 years, from substantive (as opposed to technical) scientific debate. The idea that science is over

here and socio-political decisions are over there is the core concept that sustains Eurocentrism, since the only universalist propositions that have been acceptable are those which are Eurocentric. Any argument that reinforces this separation of the two cultures thus sustains Eurocentrism. If one denies the specificity of the modern world, one has no plausible way of arguing for the reconstruction of knowledge structures, and therefore no plausible way of arriving at intelligent and substantively rational alternatives to the existing world-system.

In the last twenty years or so, the legitimacy of this divorce has been challenged for the first time in a significant way. This is the meaning of the ecology movement, for example. And this is the underlying central issue in the public attack on Eurocentrism. The challenges have resulted in so-called science wars and culture wars, which have themselves often been obscurantist and obfuscating. If we are to emerge with a reunited, and thereby non-Eurocentric, structure of knowledge, it is absolutely essential that we not be diverted into side paths that avoid this central issue. If we are to construct an alternative world system to the one that is today in grievous crisis, we must treat simultaneously and inextricably the issues of the true and the good.

And if we are to do that we have to recognize that something special was indeed done by Europe in the 16th to 18th centuries that did indeed transform the world, but in a direction whose negative consequences are upon us today. We must cease trying to deprive Europe of its specificity on the deluded premise that we are thereby depriving it of an illegitimate credit. Quite the contrary. We must fully acknowledge the particularity of Europe's reconstruction of the world because only then will it be possible to transcend it, and to arrive hopefully at a more inclusively universalist vision of human possibility, one that avoids none of the difficult and imbricated problems of pursuing the true and the good in tandem.

#### NOTE

This paper constitutes the keynote address delivered at ISA East Asian Regional Colloquium, 'The Future of Sociology in East Asia', November 22-23, 1996, Seoul, Korea, co-sponsored by the Korean Sociological Association and International Sociological Association (ISA).

## REFERENCES

- Abdel-Malek, Anouar. 1972. *La dialectique sociale*. Paris: Seuil. [English: *Civilizations and Social Theory*, Volume I: *Social Dialectics*. 1981. London: Macmillan].
- Amin, Samir. 1991. 'The Ancient World-Systems versus the Modern Capitalist World-System', *Review*, 14 (3): 349-85.
- Bury, J. B. 1920. *The Idea of Progress*. London: Macmillan.
- Chen, Xiaomei. 1992. 'Occidentalism as Counterdiscourse: 'He Shang' in Post-Mao China', *Critical Inquiry*, 18 (4): 686-712.
- Hopkins, Terence K. and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1996. *The Age of Transition: Trajectory of the World-system, 1945-2025*. London & New Jersey: Zed Press.
- Jones, E. L. 1981. *The European Miracle: Environment, Economics, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Needham, Joseph. 1954. *Science and Civilisation in China* (Multiple volumes in progress). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nisbet, Robert A. 1980. *History of the Idea of Progress*. New York: Basic Books.
- Rickert, Heinrich. 1913. *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, 2. neu beart. Aufl. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr. [English: *The Limits of Concept Formation in the Physical Sciences*. 1986. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.]
- Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Sanderson, Stephen K. (ed.). 1995. *Civilizations and World Systems: Studying World-Historical Change*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira.
- Smith, Adam. 1937 [1776]. *The Wealth of Nations*. New York: Modern Library.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. 1956. 'The Place of Oriental Studies in a University', *Diogenes*, 16: 106-111.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1992a. 'The West, Capitalism, and the Modern World-System', *Review*, 15, (4): 561-619.
- . 1992b. 'Capitalist Civilization', Wei Lun Lecture Series II, *Chinese University Bulletin*, 23 [reproduced in *Historical Capitalism, with Capitalist Civilization*, 1995. London: Verso].
- . 1995. *After Liberalism*. New York: New Press.



# Studying Problems of Aging

M. S. Gore

In recent years the interest in undertaking studies relating to the status and condition of the elderly in our population has been a growing. In India this interest among social scientists is only about two decades old and owes part to the initiative taken by the Department of Social Welfare of the Government of India in the seventies in sponsoring a number of studies focusing on the problems faced by the elderly. At the international level the growth of research on aging spans a longer period and is a direct consequence of the fact that the proportion of the population of the elderly to the total population in those countries has increased rapidly from about 5 or 6 per cent in the pre-industrial stage to between 12 per cent and 20 per cent at present. Naturally the problems that this sizeable proportion of the population faces and the problems that it poses to the economic and social service systems in these societies demand careful study.

This interest in the elderly, in the problems they face and in the ones that they pose to the rest of society is likely to be enhanced further since the United Nations has declared that the year 1999 will be the International Year of Older Persons. Already a number of workshops seminars and symposia are being planned in preparation for the year. It may be useful at this stage if the work done by Indian social scientists in this area is briefly reviewed and an effort made to develop a rationale and frame work for more work in the future. Important work in this direction has already been done by K.K. Gangrade, P.V. Ramamurti, D. Jamuna, K. G. Desai and R. D. Naik and, more recently by S. Sivaraju. They bring under their ambit the works by social workers, sociologists, psychologists and other social scientists. Demographers have of course an older tradition of work in this area. More recently

---

M. S. Gore is the Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi 110067

---

some members of the medical profession have also evinced an interest in geriatric medicine as a special area of study. The perspective of this paper will be primarily sociological and social work oriented though we will also cover areas which interest psychologists and make a note of the areas of common and separate interest for these disciplines.

Sociology is a study of social structures, the conditions of their origin and continuity, their inter-linkages and the effect they have on human lives. A social structure is a relatively stable pattern of relationships between individuals in specific situations, between individuals and groups and between groups. Social structures are rooted in values or idea systems that give them legitimacy and are perpetuated by relative conformity of individuals and groups in specific situations to the defined patterns of behaviour. Any specified pattern of behaviour involves appropriate motivations, sentiments and overt actions, and values governing these actions and motivations.

Social work is concerned with helping individuals and groups to overcome limitations or impediments which stand in the way of an individual or group's ability to perform its normal social functions and derive normal life satisfactions. Social work seeks to facilitate the enhancement of a person's or group's abilities to cope with its social and physical environment in the pursuit of legitimate goals.

From a combined sociological and social work perspective, therefore, we are concerned with studying how a society defines roles which are considered appropriate for its aged members, what types of adjustments or relearning these roles may require of the elderly, how justified these role definitions are from the perspective of the aging individual and his/her basic human rights, what difficulties the individual may face, what appropriate social mechanisms might be required to minimize the stresses and strains of aging and to maximize the potential for making aging a worthy and enjoyable life experience.

### **Aging as an Independent and Dependent Variable**

Aging is basically a biophysical and neural phenomenon characterized by a slowing down of reflexes and a decrease in physical and/or mental abilities over time. Naturally, in the initial stages most studies of aging focused on physical aging as the independent variable and sought to study the social and psychological correlates of the aging process. More

recently it has come to be recognized that physical aging is not a uniform process for all individuals in all societies, related only to the number of years a person has lived, and that it is subject to modification depending on social, environmental, psychological and life-style factors. Physical environmental factors like housing, hygiene, dietary intake and access to health services affect health and physical aging and are themselves affected by economic and social factors.

From this perspective therefore the sociology of aging not only studies how age may affect or impede the social functioning of individuals but also raises questions on how social factors affect the process of physical and social aging in a society. One would need to consider not only what the aged would need to learn or unlearn to fit into the 'aged' role but also what society would need to do to prevent early aging or what it can do to postpone the setting in of the process of aging of its members. This perspective strengthens the basis for a social scientist's interest and involvement in studies relating to aging and the condition of the elderly.

### **Retirement as an Event**

Chronological aging is expected to lead to a depletion of physical capacity and to interfere with an individual's ability to work for his livelihood. Though we know that there is considerable individual variation in the onset of physical deterioration, it may still be necessary for social, economic and administrative reasons to set, in the organized economic sector, a definite chronological age as marking the onset of the aging process. In most jobs we set 58 or 60 as the age of retirement and this becomes the line of demarcation between the working adult and the retired aged population. Those in the unorganized sector do not retire at a predetermined age and those who are self-employed tend to continue in the active 'employed' category for as long as they are physically capable. Similarly, women continue in their traditionally defined 'work' roles at home much longer than men in their formal work settings outside the home. Chronological aging, formal retirement from the employment situation and actual withdrawal from work do not always synchronize. Withdrawal from work may be necessitated by rules governing employment, it may be postponed by the need to continue to earn an income or it may be influenced by the non-recognition by

society of a housewife's activities as constituting 'work' in a formal sense.

As sociologists we would expect that this variation in the pattern of withdrawal from the work role would make for differences in the process of adjustment to the 'aging' process. Those who have to withdraw from the work role on a predetermined criterion like chronological age might be expected to respond to it in two opposite ways. Since they know when they are to retire we may expect them to prepare for such withdrawal and adjust to it easily. But even in this category those who are still in good health may find it difficult to accept that their work life should come to an end just because they have attained the age of retirement.

Retirement has several social, psychological and economic consequences for the individual. To begin with, retirement means a loss of income by way of a monthly salary. In the case of the middle and lower strata of salary earners who have no substantial savings or investments, this often means the beginning of full or partial financial dependence on one's children. One expects such dependence to be inversely related to income levels of the individual during the period he was economically active. Thus, so far as adjusting to loss of monthly income is concerned one would expect it to depend on the relative economic self-sufficiency of the individual. But retirement means not only loss of regular income but also loss of work to keep one occupied. While one is still working, the importance of being meaningfully occupied during the day may not be apparent, but on retirement lack of occupation may mean facing the problem of what to do with available time.

Loss of work also means loss of the social relationships at work. These relationships may not all have been enjoyable while one was employed but once retirement begins they are likely to assume a rosy hue and one may miss not only one's cherished work friends but also the cross exchanges with habitually irascible colleagues. This leaves a void in time and in the social world of the elderly. This problem is likely to be specially felt by the elderly male who normally works away from home in an office or a factory setting. Within the family, loss of a regular occupation and total or partial economic dependence after retirement may mean for the retiree a depletion of authority and the fear

of being taken for granted. He may feel that instead of being the decision maker, decisions are now being made for him.

In a small urban home it may also pose problems of space and privacy to the others who earlier counted on the working male being away during the day. This is a special problem in a three generation family living in a one or two room flat in the city where the adult male is at work, the children are in school and only the elderly male and the women are left at home. The loss of social contact and the loss of an effective role tend to create a social and psychological void and a sense of isolation. Again this is more likely to be the case with the male retiree than with a retired woman who may still find an appropriate familial role for herself.

While we have given some detailed thought to the event of retirement it is not the only important event marking old age. It may not even be an event in the case of many. We saw that except for those who are employed in formal economic organizations retirement is not an easily identifiable point and in the case of most women in Indian society there is no such thing as retirement from their familial roles. There are many other aspects of aging that should interest a social scientist. How does the physical reality of aging affect the life patterns of the elderly? In societies where formal employment does not exist how is old age identified as a stage in life? Is it marked by generational distance and the attainment of grand-parenthood? How do roles change for the senior generation irrespective of changes in the economic status of the individual? How are friendships and familial networks affected by aging? What happens to authority structures within the family and community? For example, it is said that unlike in modern society where age and retirement may take away some of the authority of the elderly individual, age would tend to endow the individual with additional authority in agrarian societies. Are familial authority and community status co-extensive? Or can one continue to enjoy status and authority in one without reference to one's status in the other?

### **Sociological and Psychological Foci**

The many statements made above with regard to retirement and its consequences are only possibilities—hypotheses at best. These things may come to pass or they may not. In any case, they may not all happen

to every elder and not with the same intensity. Most of these situations have social and psychological implications. The sociologist is interested in identifying the structural variables—as different from idiosyncratic factors or personality variables—which may help explain the occurrence, the non-occurrence or the variable incidence of these and other such problems. The psychologist on the other hand is interested in identifying the personality variables that may account for the emergence of particular problems of the elderly, or the consequences to the psyche of an elderly individual of particular social structures or episodes. Further, to the extent that we speak of generalized social situations as causing specific and recurrent mental or psychological problems we are in the realm of social psychology. Similarly, if there are generalized attitudes or sentiments characteristic of a cultural group which may give rise to age related problems we are again in the realm of social psychology. It is difficult to distinguish clearly between a sociological and socio-psychological perspective or a sociological and socio-psychological area of interest.

### **Common Structural Variables**

The commonly identified social structural variables which are expected to make a difference to the condition of the elderly can be grouped into (i) those related to the social context of the particular individual and (ii) those related to broader social traditions or social policy. The commonly identified individual contextual factors which should make a difference to the elderly are:

*Age.* Even among the elderly the greater the chronological age the greater are likely to be the problems of the elderly, particularly in the area of health and familial involvement. The identifiable stages which may help differentiate the problems and changes could be, say, 60+, 70+, and 80 plus. These would need to be studied.

*Sex.* Sex is an important differentiating factor in the general condition of health and in the specific types of problems faced by the elderly in role change and role performance. At a general level one is aware that women live to a longer age than men and that they experience fewer and slower changes in their familial role. Is this true? The change from the status of being only a mother to becoming a mother-in-law may be more

important for a woman than the fact of chronological aging. This needs to be studied.

*Marital status.* It has been observed that for the ever-married group the state of being married is a positive factor for adjustment in old age for the male as well as the female elderly. For the male the presence of his wife means minimally the presence of the major care giver at the level of physical care and psychological support: for the female the state of being married is culturally all important and the death of her husband may also affect to a degree her authority in the family and make her wholly dependent upon her son/s. The significance of the state of being married goes beyond material and physical support. As a rule at any given time there are likely to be more widows than widowers among the elderly in any community and this situation is expected to be a stressful one for the female elderly, though from another perspective it is characterized by a considerable reduction in her caring responsibilities. The implications of being a widower or a widow need to be studied in terms of its influence on familial status, sense of dependence and intra-familial social transactions generally.

*Economic condition.* Individuals with a secure and sufficient income during their old age are likely to face less economic and psychological problems because of their ability to meet their needs, the ability to afford supportive services, and the sense of security this brings. How does this affect relationships with children? What is the cultural meaning of being dependent on one's children for one's day-to-day needs? What is the meaning of dependence for physical care as different from dependence for maintenance?

*Occupational status:* As was mentioned earlier the chances of continued occupational involvement even after the normal age of 'retirement' varies a great deal on whether one has been an employee or self-employed person and this in turn would make for a difference in the kinds of problems and challenges that one would face with age. What are the different experiences of those who have aged and retired and those who have aged but not retired?

*Education.* Differences in educational background are expected to make a difference in the level of information at command, and the ability to use such information to meet one's problems. Indirectly,

education is also associated with income differences up to a degree. The differential impact of these two factors would have to be studied.

*Family structure.* Individuals may live in unitary or joint households or even in non-household situations as independent individuals or individuals in institutions. These differences would determine the potential support system or care system available to an elderly individual. From another perspective this would also indicate the complexity of the social situation in which an elderly person has to function. One expects that a person's ability to meet its demands would depend on previous socialization and, of course, on individual personality factors.

*Location differences.* Urban-rural, metropolitan-small town locations would make for different contexts in which the aged individual functions, providing different facilities and making different demands. How do these differences affect the life of the elderly? Is one more favourable than another from the perspective of adjustments and life satisfactions?

*Social background.* Do differences in religion, caste and community make for differences in life philosophy and how critical are these for coping with life's challenges in old age?

These are a few of the background characteristics which would serve as independent variables in a study of the elderly. There are also other characteristics which are more general and would relate to the whole community or society. These are matters of governmental policies and available services for health, residential care, domiciliary services, social security, assistance systems, and the like. The presence or absence of such services would make considerable difference in facilitating or hindering the ability of the elderly individual to cope with the stresses and problems of aging.

This last should be our real focus. How are the elderly adjusting to the fact of aging and its physical and social consequences? How do they look at life? Do they find it creative and enjoyable or regard it merely as something to be tolerated or coped with until they are caught up by illness and death? Are they involved in social relationships or do they find themselves increasingly marginalized and isolated? How do they keep themselves engaged? Do they have friendships and relational networks? How widespread, varied and meaningful are these? How has



age affected their intra-familial relationships? What are the different types of economic and social support systems that exist and are newly emerging for the elderly in our society?

### **Descriptions and Analysis of Relationships**

Descriptive studies tend to limit themselves to collection of data on these individual and community background characteristics or attitudes and opinions and present them in reports. But one could also think of studies where these variables are studied in relation to each other or as independent variables in relation to certain dependent variables, say, health, or life satisfaction, or attitude to illness and death, or levels of community participation, or types of social networks that the elderly develop in different contexts. Similarly, studies could be undertaken of the relationships among the mentioned 'dependent' variables themselves. For example, one could examine whether continued work involvement and greater life-satisfaction levels and positive and negative mental attitudes influence health or influence each other. Such analytical studies which seek to search for relationships and the flow of influences from one set of factors to the other would deepen our understanding of the aging process and its correlates from the social perspective.

### **Areas of Interest for Sociology, Psychology and Social Work**

If the sociologist focuses on the social structure and immediate social context of the individual as an independent variable for studying the process and problem of aging the psychologist focuses upon the individual person and his mental and personality characteristics as the important factors in understanding aging. The individual personality can be both an independent variable as well as a dependent variable in psychological studies. The psychologist will seek to study how particular types of personalities or rather particular individuals with given mental and emotional resources will respond to the stress of aging and how the experience of physical aging might affect the mental and emotional functioning of the individual. Psychologists and sociologists might also wish to know how the presence of an aging individual affects the life of the other members of the household and what demands this situation makes on them. Ramamurti and Jamuna have grouped the various psychological studies done on aging as studies of the following themes:

cognitive aging; adjustment and its determinants; life satisfaction; mental health and its determinants; aging and mental rigidity; aging, stress and coping; aging and frustration; aging in relation to religiosity; death, anxiety and personal futility; intra-familial and inter-generational aspects of aging; social support systems in aging; public perception and attitude toward the aged and aging; and, finally, the markers of successful aging.

It is obvious that there are many areas listed above which would figure both in a list of sociological and psychological studies. This overlap is natural because society and personality are interactive systems and a study of the one without taking cognizance of the other is almost impossible. Further, the discipline of social psychology has adherents both among sociologists and psychologists. The emphasis however may differ with the sociologist tending to treat the social structure as his focus of study and his main explanatory tool and the psychologist treating the human personality as his focus and his major explanatory tool. But in studying problems of aging the psychologist is also concerned with how the social structure may affect the human personality. The sociologist is less likely to study the impact of human personality on the social structure but it could be argued that the human personality is an important limiting variable or limiting condition in the development and functioning of social structures. There will naturally be differences between the sociologist and psychologist in their theoretical perspectives and sometimes in methodology, though in the area of social psychology even this latter difference has tended to fade with both adopting experimental designs, questionnaires and interviews as the main tools of study.

The difference between sociological and social work perspectives in the studies relating to the elderly is not so much methodological or theoretical as one of the goals that they set for their work. The sociologist may be satisfied with deepening our understanding of what the aging process means to the individual and what problems it poses to society. Social work focuses on what can or needs to be done with the problems which we study. In this task social work cannot limit itself to the sociological perspective but must need to draw equally on psychological insights because the social worker is concerned not only with the problem as perceived at the societal level but with the problem

as experienced at the individual level. His solutions must also straddle simultaneously areas of social policy and individual care and counselling. An area of special interest for social work would be a detailed study of the 'care needs' of elderly individuals differentiated by age-groups, sex and class. Correspondingly, there is a case for studying in detail the various chores involved in care-giving and the patterns characteristic of domiciliary and institutional care. Further, a study of the problems experienced by the care giver may lead to programmes of strengthening care-giving skills.

There is a need increasingly for sociologists to move from mere description and or even analysis of social problems to a study of social policy in respect of aging. When this happens the sociologist will also move to questions of which social policy is likely to be more appropriate in a given society at a given time and what the costs and benefits of pursuing different policies might be. There is also an important need to study aging in the rural context and see to what extent our stereotype of a relatively easier process of aging in the rural community is valid. A majority of the studies of the elderly so far have been of the elderly in the urban context.

In this discussion I have limited myself to sociological, psychological and social work approaches in the study of problems of aging but economics, political science and management science would also have important inputs to make in studying the problems of aging and the policies to be adopted for their redress. Political science will help define the scope and possibility of developing and pursuing particular policies in a given political context and warn us of the consequences that might follow any effort to force the pace or import policy solutions which the polity does not support. Management science will help us review the objectives and administration of current policies and services and aid in designing appropriate delivery systems for these and newer services.

#### NOTE

This paper constitutes the special lecture delivered at the XXIII All India Sociological Conference, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, 23-25 November 1996.

# **PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: SOME AREAS OF CURRENT CONCERN**

**Hari Mohan Mathur**

## **I**

The upsurge in commitment to participatory processes in development which recent years have witnessed is truly phenomenal. The reality is acknowledged by the UNDP's *Human Development Report 1993* in its very opening sentence: 'People's participation is becoming the central issue of our time' (UNDP 1993: 1). Participatory development is now inscribed as an essential goal on agendas of practically all development agencies—international, governmental and private. A widely shared view in the development community is that without the commitment, creativity, energy and involvement of the people, the pace of development will not accelerate. The participatory approach is, in fact, being viewed as the most effective way of achieving equitable and sustainable development. As Oakley (1991: 25) noted, 'Whereas up to ten years ago a review of project-based literature would probably highlight technological effectiveness, good planning and management, and resource efficiency as the key ingredients of project success, today participation figures prominently; some would say that it is the single-most important ingredient.'

Participatory development owes its burgeoning popularity to a widespread concern with the shortcomings of past development strategies which in many cases made little or no difference to the lives of large segments of population, especially the poor, the women, the tribal and other vulnerable groups. The participatory approach is a reorientation of development in favour of the poor and their own view of their needs, problems and alternatives for their resolution. For UNICEF:

---

Hari Mohan Mathur is on the faculty of the Institute of Development Studies, 8-B, Jhalana Institutional Area, Jaipur 302 004

---

a development process which empowers people to take greater control over their lives, to determine priorities and take action to meet their own needs, as well as to work together towards their fulfillment, is the most effective way of achieving equitable social and human development ... While clearly an appropriate means towards the accomplishment of specific development goals, participatory development is also a process worthy of support in its own right, an expression of the rising worldwide tide of concern with people's increasing democratic control over their lives and their political, social and economic environment (Ogun and Smith 1991: 9-10).

### **THE CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE**

Nevertheless, despite the growing advocacy of participation as a promising way of stimulating broad-based people-centred development, the approach has remained rather limited in its use. Often proponents of participatory approaches to development have been more concerned with highlighting what participation can do rather than how can it be done. It may probably be true that 'Overly enthusiastic and uncritical advocates of participation have impeded its extension as much as have its adversaries' (Uphoff: 1991: 485). Participation does not 'happen' simply by proclaiming it. Observing that the advocacy for participation remains empty rhetoric if the general concept is not translated into a 'how to' social methodology for making participation real, Cernea (1992: 1) is emphatic that, 'for popular participation in government programmes to occur, it must be socially organized. Actually doing this social organizational work is more difficult by far than waxing romantically or sloganeering rhetorically about the blessings of people's participation.' Evidently, singing the praises of participation is not the same thing as putting it to work.

The fact is that while support to participation is now near universal, development of methodological tools and techniques to put it into practice has lagged much behind. The knowledge about obstacles confronting participation, and the methods helpful in getting around them remain woefully inadequate. Therefore what is needed urgently is a better understanding of participatory processes derived from successful

experiences, especially experiences of how, in practice, obstacles to participation could be overcome. That would be invaluable to development agencies and their workers everywhere. However, systematically documented cases of successful participatory development experience which could yield useful lessons are relatively few in number. 'The literature on participation comes back again and again to about 25 well-worn cases' (Qureshi: 1992: 247).

If participation is really to be widely promoted, it will henceforth be necessary to concentrate on issues of practice, on how projects with a participatory orientation operate on the ground. Platitudes would have to give way to the task of developing methodologies for participation. The effort should be to 'identify and mobilize the specific social actors whose participation is sought, and open the practical ways in which they could participate in project design, execution, and monitoring' (Cernea 1991a: 465). It is only when actors involved play their part positively that real participation occurs. The key issue is a social one: 'how to generate and sustain the *involvement of the social actors*, the people who give life to the project?' (Cernea 199b: 340).

Who are these social actors? What constraints and choices do they face in participatory development? How can players in the participatory development process become more productive and sustainable? It is such questions that are the particular focus in this discussion on practice-related concerns of participatory development.

## **OBSTACLES TO PARTICIPATION**

To understand better the role of social actors in participatory development, especially in cases where they have been successful in overcoming obstacles to participation, it seems necessary to first have some idea of the nature and extent of those obstacles. Field studies indicate that the practice of participation has never been completely trouble-free. Obstacles, encountered at every step, are numerous and often prove quite formidable (Marsden: 1991). What are those obstacles that frustrate attempts at participatory development? Broadly, these could be grouped by their origin: some arise within the community, others originate outside.

**Obstacles from Within**

The poor have been dominated by and dependent upon local elite groups for too long. As a result, a mentality of dependence has overtaken them. This has rendered them incapable of taking their own decisions, a process integral to the participatory model of development. In their dependent role, they hardly are in a position to challenge the dominant groups. In the face of inequities it seems doubtful if genuine participation can occur at all. Moreover, the people who have always enjoyed positions of prominence oppose by whatever means they can any suggestion for downgrading their status.

Centuries of poverty and injustice have bred on overwhelming fatalism among the poor (Mathur 1989a). Life experience counsels them against expectations of any sudden and sustained improvement in their situation. Those who promise help are suspect in their eyes as people with ulterior motives. It can be difficult for people to gain confidence enough in their own power to control things for themselves.

The traditional social structures account for inertia among the poor in no small measure. The poor live in societies which are highly stratified with castes and classes clearly demarcated in a rigid hierarchic order. Religion, language, ethnicity and other socio-cultural forces divide the poor and undermine a unified challenge to the position of powerful elite groups.

In the circumstances in which the poor find themselves, mere survival is the greatest challenge they face. Participation demands time and energy, but the struggle for existence consumes all of their energy and time. Often the poor are much too busy with many other commitments to be able to find time for participation. It is a luxury that they just cannot afford.

**Obstacles from the Outside**

Participatory approaches are of recent origin. To outside institutions and individuals, the people beginning to organize themselves for participation appear threatening. Instead of extending support to the participatory effort, they therefore begin opposing it in subtle ways initially which often give way to open resistance. Not fully appreciating what these initiatives involve, they choose to follow the path they

consider safe, that is, to withhold resources of information, materials, training, and so on. As Ghai (1988: 27) observed:

The participatory approach, especially in its empowerment version, tends to be mistakenly equated by the dominant groups with subversion or revolutionary doctrine. As such, many participatory initiatives have to contend with hostility, harassment and attempts at suppression. Certainly, few attract resources of the type and amount reserved for more conventional development projects.

By their very nature, centralized government structures happen to be non-participatory in their outlook as well as the manner in which they carry out the task of promoting development at the periphery in particular. As far as possible, they tend to keep people out of decision-making processes which they zealously guard as their exclusive preserve. For fear of losing power, their own agencies at the local level are not strengthened. The decentralized structures which can be responsive to local needs and better able to involve people then cease to be effective (Mathur 1983: 207-244). As Franda (1979: 259-60) noted: 'In India despite much rhetoric about the need for decentralization, the fear of strong rural organizations has dominated central government planning.' Denied any share in making decisions, resources or information required for development, the people find participation hardly a goal worth considering.

Likewise, administrators working for such centralized government structures also tend to adopt non-participatory attitudes. Even for projects with participatory objectives, they often devise complicated, dilatory and ambiguous procedures which only deter rather than encourage people to come forward. Government officials expect and demand deference from the people whom they are supposed to serve, maintaining an air of superiority all the time. In the field they also dress and act in a manner that sets them apart from the village people. Often, the officials belong to higher caste groups whereas the poor come from groups lower in the caste hierarchy. This difference in social background does not allow interaction between officials and the people which is so necessary for development to proceed on a participative basis.



Many participatory efforts do not go far enough because an enabling environment does not exist. The legal system can prove an obstacle to participation. It does not take enough action to educate the people about their rights and what they can do to legally form associations to promote their interests. Moreover, legal provisions require government approval which imply a level of literacy which the poor clearly lack. The system thus tends to operate against participation.

### SOCIAL ACTORS

The participatory process that aims to move people on to the centre stage of development must involve a wide range of social actors—from local to external. At the local level, the social actors include the people themselves, the communities they live in, their leaders, a myriad of local-level social groups and organizations—formal as well as informal, old and new (such as caste forums, tribal networks, women's groups, savings and credit societies, *panchayats*, irrigation and other resource users' associations, farmers and other workers unions, grassroots organizations and so on). Among the external social actors are government agencies, local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), paraprofessionals, activists and others. On the international horizon, the social actors include multilateral organizations (such as the World Bank, United Nations agencies, OECD), bilateral donors (such as CIDA, DSE), northern NGOs (Oxfam, CARE, Save the Child) and the like. It is important that the social actors view participatory development as a partnership venture. Participatory processes entail many opportunities for interaction among them.

#### At the Local Level

*People.* The central actors in a participatory process at the community level are, of course, the people themselves. But do people want to participate? Many development workers once held a rather distorted view of the people as 'being ultra-conservative individuals, steeped in traditions, hemmed in by custom, lacking in motivation and incentive, captives of age-old methods, and lacking in ability to make decisions' (Prawl: 1969). The portrayal of people in this light regards

them as incapable of coming out of their isolation to become part of the wider world experiencing rapid change and development.

Evidence now becoming available is in sharp contrast with the earlier negative characterization of the poor in the village society. Reporting on a South Asian experience of training for participatory development, Bhasin (1983: 69) asserts that the poor in fact are more than willing and able to participate.

Widely reported in the literature on participatory development, the Bhoomi Sena movement stands out as a convincing illustration not only of the willingness but also the ability of the poor to organize themselves for participation (Rahman 1981; Sethi 1980). The struggle by Bhoomi Sena (meaning land army) of the tribal people in Palghar, Maharashtra, India, initially arose more or less as a spontaneous reaction against their oppression and exploitation by local moneylenders. Since its beginning in 1970, the movement (now with some help from new outside activists) has extended to well over 80 villages, with its agenda broadened to include several other issues of common interest, such as land alienation, minimum wages, and bonded labour.

Many experiences suggest, however, that by and large the poor in their circumstances indeed do prefer to steer away from participation. The obstacles to participation which they face prove too disheartening for them to move in the desired direction. Therefore unless there is something very vital at stake, they would rather leave the burden to others.

Participation for whom? This is a question now being increasingly raised. If the goal is to achieve genuine participation, it is indeed important to know who is or is not involved in the development process (Uphoff 1922: 141) Marginal farmers? Landless workers? Tribal people? Women? People living in remote areas? Minority groups? These groups have remained largely unaffected by previous development strategies. On the other hand, there is no dearth of participation by the local elite groups. Even in programmes directed at the poor, they have a strong presence. Not only are development benefits often captured by them, the poor even lose leadership roles to them. 'A Reserve Bank of India study revealed that in the Farmers' Service Society (FSS)—in which two-thirds of the weaker sections were to constitute the board of directors—merchants, traders, landlords and college teachers were

elected as small farmers' (Bhatt 1987: 107). A growing concern for participation of the groups which were earlier left out is thus understandable.

*Communities.* Communities in which people live have long played a major role in efforts at participatory development. One of the first attempts to involve communities in their development in a participatory manner was India's community development programme launched in 1952. This programme was based on the premise that rural communities were closely knit, undifferentiated, harmonious entities and that in mere response to exhortations of development officials, everybody in the village would come forward in a spirit of cooperation to help build schools, wells, roads and other community facilities. The assumption was that people would work together on a footing of equality and share equitably in benefits flowing from such participative endeavours. In the end the results proved disappointing as the very initial optimism itself was not rooted in sociocultural realities on the ground (Mathur 1982a: 17-28).

The fact is that the village community, often held up as a model of solidarity where people live in perfect harmony, does not exist in reality. Communities are more likely to be a collection of factions with diverse interests each trying to promote interests of its own. Few communities are idealized harmonious and homogeneous wholes which some earlier studies depicted. Conflicts are not uncommon in rural areas and the people there are not all that cooperative. Factionalism is often rampant and inequities abound.

People are suspicious of their neighbours who they fear will seize all the opportunities that participatory projects bring. For this reason they are not willing to cooperate with others. Often it is attempts to introduce change that bring dormant factionalism into the open. If a new programme is acceptable to one group, the other one must automatically resist and reject it, no matter how beneficial it may be for the whole community. The mere fact that the programme has found favour with one group is reason enough to oppose it. It is impossible for factions to work together, act as partners in development activities that eventually are meant to benefit everybody in the community.

*Local-level Self-help Groups.* In an anthropological sense, human groups are seldom without basic forms of organization. No group can hope to survive if it is disorganized. Kinship networks, social structures, religious organizations, youth dormitories, communal labour arrangements, peasant leagues, burial societies, self-help groups form the scaffolding of communities in traditional societies. Local-level self-help groups are known by several names.

The local level organizations have appeared on the scene to make it possible for people to accomplish as a group what they cannot accomplish individually. They owe their popularity to risks that they often take on issues that matter vitally to the people. Often starting with rudimentary activities, small groups are able 'to nurture new ideas, build on local strengths, and develop new power structures. In some cases, those small groups make timely and critical contributions which are important for the people at the margin' (Pandey 1991: 164). They can provide members with greater negotiating leverage and also a platform to air their views on local development issues.

In order for people to participate it is essential that they have an organizational base for participation. Participation pre-supposes group organization. On the critical importance of local organizations, it was remarked: 'High yielding social organizations are no less important for development than high-yielding crop varieties, and intensified agriculture cannot occur without intensified human organization' (Cernea 1990: 26). Local organizations are a strategic resource to foster sustainable participatory development and for this reason Cernea (1993: 22-24) urges investing heavily in organization development efforts, maintaining that many development failures can be averted by pursuing a strategy of investing in 'organization-ness', that is, by supporting local and voluntary organizations of resource users, such as water users' associations.

The group approach has proved its efficacy in several cases. This was the approach that the Small Farmer Development Agency (SFDA) followed in Nepal. Farmers and landless labourers were organized into small groups, the idea being that members of these cohesive groups would be in a better position to receive and make use of benefits from the project (Rahman 1984). FAO People's Participation Programme

(PPP), mainly concentrated in Africa, also used group approach to good effect (FAO 1990). Sponsored by AMUL, the small cooperatives of milk producers in villages of Gujarat, India were also formed on the same basis (Paul 1982: 15-36). In these programmes, which have been successful in reaching the poor producers, activity is focused on small groups.

Local groups have their own weaknesses as well. They are site specific, small in scale with only a limited impact. They do not easily lend themselves to scaling up. As Durning (1989: 168) observed: 'Local groups eventually collide with forces they cannot control. Peasant associations cannot enact supportive agricultural policies or build roads to distant markets. Women's groups cannot develop and test modern contraceptive technologies or rewrite bank lending rules. Forest people cannot give themselves a seat at the table in national forest planning.' Thus local groups are dependent on public policies and a variety of other external factors. For example, policies that determine whether they can get credit from the banking system directly impinge on their productivity efforts.

These weaknesses notwithstanding, local groups have often shown remarkable resilience and seem to be flourishing in many places. Currently they are increasingly being identified as critical to the success of participatory development. Where local groups with potential to serve participatory programmes do not exist, new ones are being formed. Development agencies find that involvement of local groups in project activities can be helpful in many ways. As one study of local organizations pointed out, local groups can help provide better information about local needs, help adapt programmes to local conditions, provide opportunities for better communication, help mobilize local resources, improve the odds that use and maintenance of facilities will be sustained, and improve cooperation with local people who can benefit from the innovation (Esman and Uphoff 1984: 24-26).

### **External to the Community**

Based on a review of experience with participatory approaches, Uphoff (1989: 9) concluded: 'Empirically speaking, the best results from local participation are seen when initiative comes primarily from the community itself rather than from any outside source.' Ideally,

participation must arise from within the community; participation which is externally induced sounds a contradiction in terms. In reality, however, participation seems not to occur entirely by efforts of the local people themselves. It is almost invariably stimulated by outside forces. The degree of external support may vary from case to case, but it is there all the same. Participation without the initiative of external agencies is unthinkable to Oakley (1991: 175):

While some purists might argue that participation should be a wholly internal process and should be allowed to emerge solely on the basis of internal abilities and direction, the practice reveals the inevitable presence of some kind of external agency in projects which seek to promote participation. Furthermore, this external agency takes the initiative.

The role that the outside actors play in participatory processes is considered below.

*Government Agencies.* In the decades following independence, government has emerged as the initiator, executor and arbiter of all development. Therefore, government agencies and their services, whether in health, education, or agriculture, have multiplied rapidly. The assumption has been that the prime mover of development is the government, rather than the people themselves.

Traditionally, the people have mattered little or nothing to planners and administrators. In their scheme of things, it is still quite common to consider them last of all, often as an afterthought (Mathur 1986). Disdainful of local knowledge, government agencies in the capital often decide on programmes for the people on their own, notifying their leaders later only in case their labour is needed for some construction activity. 'Control and authority, rather than support and equality, frequently form the basis of the relationship between a Third World government and its citizens. Dominance hides in the shadow of the official promotion of microdevelopment' (Fowler 1990: 11).

Government agencies nowhere are known for any great interest in initiating participatory structures and sharing responsibility for development activities with the local people. Promoting people-centred

development is not the task for which government agencies were set up in the first instance. Essentially they were designed with some regulatory functions in view (Mathur 1990). Typically, attempts by government personnel to work with the people have tended to be paternalistic and only reinforce dependency, stifling whatever initiative the people may have.

There is a growing feeling that government agencies continue to lack participatory convictions. The criticism of government-led development is now becoming increasingly strident (Jain 1985). Some have even suggested de-bureaucratization of the entire development establishment. But none has yet come up with an alternative to it, some kind of an arrangement that could replace the existing one. However, the growing consensus favours the strengthening of governmental system into an effective instrument of furthering people-centred development.

What can be done to bring about the transformation in bureaucracies so that they become forces more supportive of people's participation in development? The effort must begin with a redefinition of the role of government bureaucracies and management systems. Government officials who traditionally have seen their role as controllers must now view it differently as one of enablers. Power must increasingly pass into the hands of people themselves as Racelis and Stieffel (1990) suggested: 'A participatory policy basically implies deconcentration of power, with the state divesting itself of control and responsibility in many fields. It implies a different philosophy in which the government is not the main actor, but the people are.'

From the perspective of villagers, the national government agencies remain distant, semi-alien forces. On the other hand, local authorities are closer to them. It is with them that they usually interact. Local governments are indeed powerful participative structures. They can assist the poor to organize themselves, thus giving them a voice in the decision-making structures that determine their lives. It was to devolve power to the people that *panchayati raj* in India was introduced way back in 1959. However, the realization that except in two or three states the programme has remained frail and faltering recently led to an amendment in the Constitution of India. Armed with more powers under the 73rd Amendment, the *panchayati raj* institution is expected to play a

significant role in bringing the people on to centrestage of the development process.

The delegation of central authority to locally elected authorities does not, however, always proceed along anticipated lines. 'This is because traditional elites are likely to be most intransigent in their traditional, local settings. Pass power to them, and the repression of the weaker and disadvantaged castes and classes is likely to worsen' (Lewis 1988: 10). Such ill-effects are however not entirely unavoidable. An appropriate policy and institutional framework can facilitate proper functioning of local authorities. In fact, strengthening local government should be the most critical element in bringing about a supportive, enabling environment for participative activities.

It is possible that all agencies in the government may not be equally enthusiastic about participation. While participation may not be of explicit interest to one ministry, another ministry may in fact be enthusiastic about it and even seeking involvement of people in its programmes and projects. In India, for example, 'The Rural Development and the Home Ministries seem to have adopted contradictory policies—the Rural Development Ministry for promoting education, organization and mobilization and the Home Ministry for preventing such action' (Vettivel 1992: 14). One should, therefore, beware of regarding governments as altogether monolithic and all its agencies pursuing identical ends by identical means: 'space' exists for divergent views and programmes, particularly within the social sectors. But, of course, the predispositions, policies, and practices of governments remain the conditions that eventually determine whether or not the people have opportunities to participate.

*Non-governmental Organizations.* For their role in development, non-governmental organizations have won wide acclaim. Particularly applauded is their presumed capacity to reach the poor (Pachauri: 1994). NGO insights on people-centred development are being viewed as valuable and increasingly fed into new projects (Drabek 1987). There is a growing recognition worldwide that NGOs do a better job than governments in not only promoting participation but also in converting aid money into development that lasts. They are



becoming an important resource in the implementation of donor-aided participatory approaches (World Bank 1990).

One consequence of this growing interest in NGOs is a big increase in public funding to their projects, especially funding from international donors. In fact, the position seems to be that many NGOs literally have money coming in faster than they can spend it. The number of NGOs has risen sharply in recent years and the curve is maintaining the trend. One estimate for India is that there may be around 100,000 NGOs, of which roughly 25,000 are active in some way or the other (Verma: 1993). Usually the number turns out to be larger than that listed in most Directories of NGOs. It seems that NGOs do particularly well in some selected sectors. These would include: providing primary health care, introducing literacy, distributing credit, training the village people, delivering public services, and so on.

A notable feature of the NGO approach is the way they relate to the poor, involving them in development activities aimed at poverty alleviation. NGOs that are involved in building people's organizations at the grassroots level offer an approach to participatory development that appears to have eluded many of the conventional approaches. As agents of development for the poor, they clearly appear to have an edge over government agencies. They are closer to the people and therefore they understand them better. Proximity to the people ensures their involvement in projects. It is also possible for NGOs to monitor the implementation of projects closely and if necessary make corrections in midstream. Small size and administrative flexibility make it easier for them to try innovative solutions to problems.

NGOs tend to view themselves as pursuing a participatory approach which is uniquely their own, giving them particular strengths which the government agencies are believed to lack. It is because of these distinct advantages they possess that, in comparison with government agencies, NGOs are better able to: (1) reach the poor; (2) obtain true, meaningful participation of intended beneficiaries; (3) be flexible and responsive in their work; (4) strengthen local level institutions; (5) achieve outcomes at less cost; (6) experiment with alternative ideas and practices; (7) utilize indigenous knowledge and other local resources (Fowler 1990: 11).

How far this depiction of their self-image is a true account of the NGOs strengths remains debatable. As Lewis (1988: 21) observed, some of the advantages that give NGOs their reputation have nothing to do with their being simply an NGO:

There is a problem of scale. Enlarged to the proportions of public programmes, the private agencies can lose much of the flexibility that makes them attractive. Further, some of the greater cost-effectiveness than often is attributed to them reflects their use of publicly provided inputs and infrastructure . . . NGOs are part of the answer to strengthening the poor, but by no means all of it.

On the basis of their studies, Gazelius and Millwood (1988) are unable to state categorically that NGO-supported participatory projects are more effective than government-supported ones. Further research will obviously be needed before coming to any definite conclusion on NGO claims to superior performance (Shephard et al. 1986; Tendler 1982).

While it is true that the examples of NGO experiences are in general more positive with respect to participation, this does not mean that NGOs are always more disposed towards and effective in participatory development. In a number of cases NGOs have been rather paternalistic in their approach (Uphoff 1989: 9). A study of 75 NGO projects found that what was often termed participation was in practice a form of decentralized decision making still dominated by NGO staff and local elites, and that local elites often received a disproportionate share of benefits (Tendler 1982: 11-14). At the same time, there are examples where governments and donors have promoted participation as a major project component, as in Mexico's well documented World Bank-funded PIDER (Cernea 1983). As participants at a Royal Tropical Institute seminar held at Amsterdam in 1985 observed: 'The stereotyped way of thinking often encountered—that NGOs 'can do' and government departments 'cannot'—is an oversimplification' (Jaeger 1986: 64).

What about the general belief that NGOs are especially effective in reaching the poor? The evidence suggests that they are more effective with the poor who have some assets but less effective with the very poor lacking any assets at all. A recent IFAD study is forthright on this point:

There is evidence, which partners such as IFAD should take note of, that the poorest of the poor are not always reached by NGOs . . . NGOs can help to reach the poorer communities, but unless there is close monitoring, opportunities may still be seized by local elites . . . Involving NGOs in poverty-alleviating projects does not thus provide an automatic guarantee against the leakage of benefits (Jazairy et al. 1992: 350).

The NGO image in recent years seems to have lost some of its luster on other counts as well. This is more due to certain actions of 'big and established groups that tend to win awards, dominate the development discourse, and impress funding agencies' (Pandey 1991: 246). The major criticism is against their preference for and dependence on external funding assistance which is contradictory to a process of self-reliant local development. Karat (1984, 1988) went as far as linking foreign aid to some imperialist strategy. He even asserted that many NGOs were working not for the local people but for outside agencies.

Once established at the local level, NGOs seem to be in no hurry to work themselves out of job. On one pretext or the other, they tend not to phase out, ensuring that local capacity building does not take place. Far from turning communities into self reliant entities, they themselves are becoming dependent on them for 'doing development' in perpetuity. NGOs, such as Astha, in Rajasthan, India, that have a plan to phase out from villages which, with the emergence of local leadership, become capable enough to take care of themselves, are fewer in number (Best 1990: 25-29).

The rapid increase in the number of NGOs wanting to promote development in villages is not attributable to any newly awakened spirit of voluntarism. As Alliband (1983: 91-95) sees it voluntarism is becoming a cottage industry operated for the benefit of a handful of staff members involved. In a situation in which there are millions of starving poor, tens of foreign donor agencies out to help them, it should not be very uncommon for some opportunists to set up agencies to benefit their members and cronies, which in reality may be only disguised fronts for private business ventures.

In assessing the performance of NGO's successes or failures often tend to be blown out of their true proportions. The need is to have a

more balanced assessment, a better understanding of their real ability to reach the poor and promote participation and sustainability, as well as their own accountability. (Gulhati et al.: 1995). Some of the above comments may seem highly critical of NGO performance. They however are not intended to underplay the unique contribution of NGOs in helping to give participatory convictions a concrete shape in many local settings. A number of successful participatory interventions have come from NGOs, but to regard them as a panacea would be to swing to an extreme position (Allen 1990).

*Development Workers.* A process of participatory development rarely occurs as a spontaneous initiative by the people themselves. Often they need to be stimulated and assisted by someone from outside. In initiating the process the key person is the development worker at the village level (Tilakaratna 1991: 223-252; 1987). Neither government agencies nor NGOs can do without him. He is the one in constant contact with the people, helping them to organize for participation. Participatory projects need to include development workers to handle this specific job. The term to denote the development worker varies from place to place. Animator, facilitator, organizer, catalyst, promoter, change agent, activist are some names in use. Animator (a word derived from the French word 'animateur') is a widely used designation.

Whatever be his name the role of the development worker is essentially to encourage people to reflect on their situation, build up their critical awareness of what they might wish to change, and how they might go about it. His role is to help people to think for themselves, not tell them what to think. It is one of being more responsive and less instructive. People are not willing to accept uncritically ideas that come from outside. To a question 'In what sense do you think outside help is useful?' the following was the answer given by activists of the Bhoomi Sena Movement in India:

We need outside help for analysing and for a better understanding of our situation and experience, but not for telling us what we should do.

An outsider who comes with ready-made solutions and advice is worse than useless. He must first understand from us what our

questions are and help us articulate the questions better, and then help us find solutions. Outsiders also have to change. He alone is a friend who helps us to think about our problems on our own (de Silva et al. 1988).

As a first step, development workers help people to think for themselves, and then mobilize them around simple issues that concern them all. People begin to gain self-confidence as they proceed further and with success, feel better able to face larger issues. This is how, for example, workers of Astha, a small NGO in Rajasthan, succeeded in organizing tribal women in their struggle against contractors of 'tendu' leaves (used in rolling a kind of local cigarette called 'bidi'), eventually giving the local group the confidence and skills to negotiate a higher price for their product. As a study of this participatory experience found, Astha could help tribal women to overcome their powerlessness mainly by encouraging them to identify, analyse and then take action on issues that affect their lives. 'The people have learned many things as a result of analysis, action, reflection-on-action, and more action' (Shrivastava 1993: 32).

One way of enlarging access to project services and giving people more opportunity to participate at the same time is to use paraprofessionals. The Jhamked health project remains one of the most successful examples of reliance on largely illiterate, locally recruited village health workers as the lynch-pin of the whole programme (Arole and Arole: 1975). The health worker is selected by the village people themselves, is herself a part of the community and through her work has earned the respect of the community.

In technical competence, paraprofessionals are no match to professionals, and they should not be seen as an alternative to professionals. To be successful they need the help of professionals in many ways. It is their social expertise which is their particular strength. Female paraprofessionals, for example, are better placed than male doctors to discuss birth control matters with village women. A study from Nepal noted:

Another big advantage in having local illiterate women working in the village is that village people still see them as insiders and will

often reveal to them more information needed to diagnose and treat their illness. They see them as friends as well as health workers, a situation rarely found when a village health worker is a literate man from another district.

Seeing a fellow Sherpa villager as their health worker also gives Sherpas and Shepanis pride. They now recognise that their own village people can learn new skills and ways of helping them to help themselves (Dawson and Uhrig 1983: 21).

### **International Development Institutions**

While the use of external resources both in initiating and in strengthening participatory capacities at the local level appears to be ubiquitous, this can be a delicate matter for external agents (Alamgir 1989: 8). For one thing, to promote people's participation is to empower them, a concept with which many are still ill at ease. For another, there is always the risk that participatory development imposed from outside may lead the poor from one form of dependency to another—hardly the goal of development. Dependence on outside experts may prevent people from acquiring the skills and ability to fend for themselves (Jazairy et al. 1992: 353).

However, the fact is that external agencies have lately begun investing heavily in projects that seek to promote participatory models of development. In giving a voice to the poor and promoting their development, participatory approaches indeed have proved their efficacy in a variety of situations across the globe. The concern of the external agencies to see that development interventions which they support reach the poor is thus entirely understandable.

In this context, a question that comes up is: Can international institutions with their global concerns and macro approaches play a meaningful role in building participation at the local level? Experience suggests that they can, but that they themselves cannot handle the task directly at the village level. The number of villages is staggering and differences among them far more pronounced than is imagined normally. The job of actually setting up participatory groups at the grassroots will necessarily have to be left to the government or local institutions. This will not lighten the burden of external agencies however. They still have a large role to play in identifying projects (that meet their policy

requirements), providing funding support, monitoring implementation, evaluating the outcome, and so on. Many complex operations relating to incorporation of participatory components into various projects need to be sorted out. And there is little previous experience to guide them in this difficult area.

Participatory development seems to have 'infected' not only some private voluntary organizations (PVOs) of the North (such as Oxfam, CARE), but also the official development agencies (World Bank, UNDP, IFAD, and SIDA, for example). As a result, their budgets have swelled in support of participatory projects and now they have far more money than they can spend within the time schedules. Progression in the career of officials in many aid agencies is dependent on incentive systems that recognize achievements by such yardsticks as the money spent rather than the impact of project on the local process of development. 'This compels them to think big and unconsciously to encourage monuments of brick and mortar which can be seen and visited. Thus a 20-bed hospital in a rural community is more easily funded than a four-bed hospital which is what is needed and can be managed in and by the community' (Verghese 1983: 60).

Many noteworthy successes achieved by local efforts suggest that money does not matter so much. It is the local initiative and organization that make the real difference. 'Chipko' is one shining example of what people can do without monetary help from outside. When a timber company entered Gopeshwar, a village in Garhwal Himalayas, India, to fell trees, local people mostly women and children rushed to the woods and hugged trees, daring loggers to let the axes fall on their backs (Bandyopadhyay and Shiva 1987).

The development process is not all funding-led; it is basically people-led (Chambers 1983). Too much of money can prove to be as bad as too little of it. 'Over funding can subvert local control, distort community priorities, promote capital-intensive technologies over effective local ones, and fuel jealousies between organizations that should be allies' (Durning 1989: 170). Yet external funding assistance is going to be in even greater demand henceforth as governments press forward with structural adjustment austerity plans. The need is to see that the funds are put to more effective use. It is also true that many worthwhile participatory development projects would not have seen the

light of day without the funding support of external agencies. In fact, some of the best known and highly successful projects are associated with the name of one international development organization or the other. Examples would include: World Bank's PIDER in Mexico, UNDP's PIDA in Sri Lanka, UNIFEM's Flora Tristan in Peru, IFAD's Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, FAO's People's Participation Programme (PPP) which started in Sierra Leone, ILO's Srilakas in Philippines, and so on.

Following a learning process approach, some international agencies have initiated steps to establish internal groups to gain greater understanding of the way participation occurs at the grassroots. The objective is to refine their approaches to project design, implementation and evaluation that will create change and give people control over their lives. The World Bank already has a bank-wide 'Learning Group on Popular Participation'. To help its staff the bank has also issued several Operational Directives with Language on Participatory Development including Operational Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples (O.D. 4.20), Involuntary Resettlement (O.D.4.30), Involving NGOs in Bank-Supported Activities (O.D.14.70) and so on (Bhatnagar and Williams: 1992). Participants at a recent UNICEF Participatory Development seminar made a recommendation to establish a task force for promoting participatory development, adding with their recommendations the terms of reference for the task force ( Ogun and Smith 1991: 38).

With their resources and clout, international development institutions such as the World Bank, OECD and others can indeed play an even more important role in seeing that the development process becomes increasingly participative. In support of participatory development international aid will be needed for quite some time to come.

### **ISSUES AND EXPERIENCES**

The preceding discussion on the role of social actors in promoting participation has brought out a number of issues and experiences of interest both to policy makers and practitioners. With development turning increasingly people-oriented, many more issues and experiences have lately come to the fore. A few selected ones are reviewed here.



Development literature is replete with stories of how plans and projects designed to promote participation at the grassroots often fail to realize their stated goal. Evidence from anthropological studies indicates that most such failures to involve the people in development activities result due to neglect of their needs, knowledge and initiative. This neglect is not necessarily intentional. The fact is that planners view things in ways that are different from the way the people do (Mathur 1982a). A study in Nepal found that while government agents were pursuing programmes for health improvement in villages, the priority for the people themselves was the health care of their farm animals (Justice: 1986: 97). In this context, Gazelius and Millwood (1986: 9) observed:

That people are ready to spend more money if the buffalo is ill than on one of the children is very hard for us Westerners to accept. But when you know that the buffalo plays a vital role in securing the long-term survival of the family as a whole, while they know they can have another child next year, you begin to understand.

It is differences in the sociocultural background of planners and the people that account for widely divergent perspectives. Unless conscious efforts are made to understand the people, their needs, the way they prefer to organize themselves for dealing with problems confronting them, the externally designed participatory approaches will not yield expected results. Experience has shown that social and cultural factors ignored in planning take revenge. Projects that are technically and otherwise sound are not necessarily socially sound as well. (Mathur 1989b: 1-22).

### **Participation Relevant Socio-cultural Variables**

Until recently, development agencies regarded socio-cultural factors as of no concern to their work. The constraining influences of these factors led to many failures in reaching the poor. It was this that has now generated an interest in socio-culturally sensitive approaches to participatory development. Alamgir (1989: 9) noted:

As experience of participatory development accumulates, more research of an anthropological nature is required to examine cases of

failure and to build stronger guidelines and modalities for success. Despite a growing volume of experiences, a number of hard questions remain to be answered if the participatory approach is to prove a consistent success.

What guidance does the anthropological and sociological research provide to those involved in the design and implementation of participatory development programmes and projects at the grassroots level? The fact is that no one community is exactly like another. Therefore, while there can be no blueprint to induce participation, considerable knowledge has accumulated which is directly usable in furthering participatory objectives in a variety of local settings (Mathur 1993).

Using knowledge of socio-cultural variables, some attempts to formulate guidelines for the benefit of development agencies and their personnel have indeed been made (Hyman et al. 1967). Essentially these guidelines put emphasis on understanding the culture of the local group, introducing projects in terms of needs as the people perceive them, adapting traditions to new circumstances, respecting indigenous knowledge, using the influence of village leaders, consulting the people, communicating development ideas in a language that the people understand, recognizing the potential of local organizations, selecting personnel with some knowledge of the poor and their behavioural patterns, and so on (UNESCAP/UNDP 1992: 73-88). To appreciate better the role of socio-cultural factors, it would be helpful to state here a few of these guidelines and the experiences that they illustrate.

*Understanding the Socio-cultural Context.* Social science analyses caution against launching any participatory development project without a thorough knowledge of the people and their culture. If the programme is to succeed, it is necessary to first undertake a study of relevant socio-cultural aspects. It is true that the study takes time and may delay the start of the project, but it will come in handy for development staff, helping them to pinpoint strategic entry points for intervention and to devise the best methods to involve the community in their development effort.

A pilot project initiated by FAO in 1983 to stimulate fisherwomen's activities undertaken in village Jaldia-Shamirpur in Bangladesh as part of the Bay of Bengal Programme for the Development of Small-Scale Fisheries (BOBP) in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand specifically attempted to first gain a clear understanding of the mind-set, aspirations, needs, skills, and work habits of fisherfolk and others in the community. This SIDA-funded project which FAO executed proved a success in not only improving the economic condition of the fisherwomen but also in helping them to get over their rather depressing self-image. A major factor that contributed to success was reported to be a comprehensive investigation of the life and culture of the target groups which this project undertook as the starting point (Haque 1986: 3-6).

*Consulting the People.* Anthropologists and other social scientists now strongly favour the practice of consulting local people for inputs to the project design and implementation. However, many development agencies regard this as a bothersome hindrance to their operations. Often, no effort is made to even sound out community sentiment on an informal basis. No wonder, the people for whom these services are designed do not come forward to use them.

On the other hand, the Arenal project in Costa Rica is an example where local people gained considerably because they were consulted in all aspects of the planning and implementation process. An Office of Resettlement was created to oversee the relocation of families in Arenal and Tronadora, the two villages which were to be submerged by Lake Arenal, as a consequence of the construction of a hydroelectric dam in 1978-79. The objectives of the Office of Resettlement were not only to provide infrastructure and compensation for lost property to the displaced population, but to help them live in new viable communities. Committees were set up in each village to advise the project team, and the people were given the opinion to select the relocation site and the design of the new urban centre. The consultative approach of the Arenal Project led to the completion of the resettlement programme in just two years before the reservoir filled. By way of contrast, in far too many similar projects, resettlement of the people affected proves to be not only

a long-drawn out process but also a traumatic experience (Hamilton 1984: 83-84).

*Using the Group Approach.* Many development projects require that people take action collectively. Projects related to environmental protection, water management, afforestation are among some examples. The importance of group structures is therefore strongly emphasized by social scientists. Small groups are particularly effective in pursuing common interests as they are more cohesive.

The Arabari experiment, West Bengal, India demonstrates the value of the group approach. The objective of the project was to stop forest depletion through encroachments, thefts and other means by providing villagers with employment in forest protection-cum-replanting activities in a way that would give them the income that they were earlier earning from sale of stolen forest products. The action-research experiment was started in 1970 by three researchers with support from the State Forest Department. The outcome of the project confirmed the assumptions made by the researchers. The villagers did everything to protect the forest, and made no illegal felling of trees. Employment in replanting generated revenue for the people as well as the project. The once-degraded forests have been largely rehabilitated and continue to flourish. A new partnership between forest officials and the participating groups has replaced the old hostilities. Encouraged by success, this model is being extended to many other areas (Cernea 1991: 378-381).

### **Participation and Gender**

Women face obstacles to participation which are formidable indeed. Their work at home and also responsibilities with income-earning activities outside leave them no time and energy. They happen to be among the poorest and the most illiterate. The cultural values, social systems and legal codes are often biased against women, ensuring that they get least opportunities to participate.

Despite numerous obstacles, some efforts towards empowerment of women have achieved results which are overwhelmingly positive. One such case of outstanding success is the Self-Employed Women's Association (or SEWA as it is known widely) in Ahmedabad, India (in Hindi 'sewā' means service). Begun in 1972 this over 46,000 strong

organization is today a major source of inspiration for all those who are grappling with development issues as they relate to women. Many of the ideas pioneered by SEWA have even begun influencing development thinking at the global level. The International Labour Organization (ILO), which sets standards for international labour laws, and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) which represents 96 million workers in 81 countries have begun to respond to SEWA's demands by initiating an ILO Convention (1990) for the recognition and protection of home-based workers (Rose 1992: 30).

SEWA is a trade union of poor women, but it is not the kind that have been around for quite a while. It arose as a response to the failure of the conventional trade unions to deal with the problems of the poor women who are self-employed or who work in the informal sector. The term self-employed is significant; it is to give a sense of dignity to its members who otherwise are denigrated as informal, unorganized, marginal or peripheral. SEWA thus provides poor women a support system not only in the workplace but also in their homes, with the broader aim of improving their standing in the communities they live in (Wignaraja 1990: 73-78).

As an organization of the poor women, 'SEWA organizes women who work in their homes, in the streets of cities, in the fields and villages of rural India, with no fixed employer, carving their small niches in the economy, day by day, with only their wits to guide them against incredible odds of vulnerability, invisibility, and poverty' (Rose 1992: 16). It has fought legal battles for their rights to work, wages, access to government services. Encouraged by success, it has worked to widen the scope of its activities. Its welfare component includes a maternal protection scheme, child care and the training of midwives.

In 1974, SEWA even opened its own bank when it became abundantly clear that the attitude of the employees of the nationalized bank was proving to be unhelpful. These employees did not know how to deal with their clients who were illiterate. To overcome the problem of illiteracy, SEWA bank uses women's photographs instead of signatures on their pass-books (Rose 1992: 25-26). Contrary to skeptics, the SEWA bank has been a tremendous success, mainly due to its innovative approaches in responding to the special needs of the poor women.

The commitment and dedication of Ela Bhatt, the founder of SEWA, is regarded by many to be the secret of this organization's success. This however is held as a point of criticism against SEWA. Experience suggests that the rise of a powerful individual is often at the expense of institutional development. As Hakim (1982) noted, dependence on charismatic leaders is associated with a high rate of project failure.

Essentially, SEWA owes its success to the group approach. Members are organized in small groups according to their activities. 'The process of regularly working and meeting together helps to create a sense of unity and mutual aid among the women' (Calman 1992: 179). SEWA experience confirms that: The only way to bring change is to 'organise, organise, and organise some more'. In numbers they have found voice and strength. When they stand in sufficient numbers, their voices do shake the balance and change things in their favour . . . (Rose 1992: 23).

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability should be the goal of any development effort if it is to have a lasting impact. Many promising projects wither away once donors pull out or the agency responsible ceases its operation. This happens because often there is none to own them, none accountable for their operation and upkeep. The question involved is one of ownership. A lack of attention towards strengthening the capacity of the people and their organizations in this regard results in the demise of otherwise well thought out development interventions.

Sustainability without involvement of the people in project activities is not achievable. To identify factors critical to the sustainability, a study was carried out in the World Bank on 25 completed agriculture and rural development projects. The findings revealed that participation by beneficiaries was a key factor for 12 projects that achieved long-term sustainability (Cernea 1987). While participation is critical to sustainability, it is also important that the people see the project as offering them substantial benefits. Projects that lay emphasis on economic activity tend to be more sustainable. SEWA is a case in point. Though important, concentrating on conscientization, awareness creation alone may not be enough (Fugelsang and Chandler 1986).

Once a project is completed, donors often cease to be much concerned with the issues of its subsequent operation and maintenance. As Ralston et al (1983: 42) observed, most external agencies want 'to have the fun of initiating something new and to leave to others the burden of maintenance'. It is important that more attention is paid to the impact that the project produces and to seeing that its benefits prove lasting.

### **Empowering the Poorest**

Experiences with a participatory approach to development indicate that conflicts with groups that wield power is inherent in calls for the empowerment of poorer groups. The roots of these conflicts lie deep in societal structures that maintain inequality. Empowerment of the weaker segments is seen as a threat to their dominant position by the powerful groups. Hence opposition to such moves. How can such obstacles to participation be then overcome? Is it at all possible? Such questions are now being increasingly asked.

The groups that have remained at the bottom rung of the social ladder are no longer prepared to accept their situation as unalterable. Such is the case with certain caste groups in India which suffered discrimination because of their low position in the caste hierarchy. What is encouraging is that some efforts of these communities to empower themselves and influence decision-making processes in their favour have begun to make a perceptible difference to the situation.

The case of Harijan communities living in South and North Arcot district, Tamilnadu, India, illustrates how constraints on participation they face were overcome (Vettivel 1992). The *panchayat* elections which took place in March 1986 gave them an opportunity to use voting power the value of which they fully understood. In exchange for votes, they could easily get some benefits for their community. And they negotiated the political deals on terms of equality with the caste Hindus (unthinkable earlier because of higher position of caste Hindus in the hierarchical system).

In order to overcome their powerlessness and stay powerful, additional steps that the Harijans took included the following: (a) They sought the support of an NGO in which they saw a source of assistance not otherwise available to them on a continuing basis; (b) They set up a

local organization called 'Sangam' which was linked to 'Sangathan', a network of NGOs in the area, giving them a voice to take their issues to government offices; and, (c) They encouraged all members of the community to take part in some activity or the other to promote their common interests.

### **Conflicts in Collective Action**

Except in some tribal settlements in remote places, communities are not necessarily homogeneous entities. The rich and the poor who share a community in fact live in separate worlds of their own, viewing things differently from their own perspectives. The seeds of conflicts are thus always present in this characteristic feature of the community.

Threatened by natural resources depletion, many communities are currently taking responsibility to save forests themselves. However, this almost internally generated collective action does not always proceed in a spirit of complete harmony either. Reporting on their intensive work in community forestry in Orissa, India, Singh and Singh (1993: 25-28) state that conflicts arise even in forest protection efforts where different factions and interest groups come together for a common cause which also offers benefits to everybody more or less equally. Conflicts may erupt when one group feels that the forest products have not been distributed in the manner agreed, when there is a struggle for leadership, when there is too much free riding, and so on.

However obstacles to participation which such intravillage conflicts generate have been overcome successfully in many cases. For example, in Orissa where traditional village-level organizations still exist they have been harnessed in the forest protection work and often these arrangements work out to be even more effective than the institutions set up by the state. Once the people decide to protect a forest, they demarcate it to let everybody else know that the area is 'reserved'. In some tribal villages of Phulbani district, the protection announcement is conveyed to the people by the beating of drums, with dire warnings that potential encroachers will be smitten with leprosy—a warning that among the tribal people works quite effectively.

In Sukhomajri, near Chandigarh, in Shivalik hills, India, disputes over the distribution of irrigation water could not be resolved by the Hills Resources Management Society which mobilized the people to



develop the watershed. In the early stages, the distribution which seemed to benefit landowners, turned out to be the cause of conflict. To resolve it, the assistance of an outside agency was sought. That played a very helpful role in settling the matter to the satisfaction of all concerned. Equal water rights were established among all members of the Sukhomajri Society. Those who had no use for their share of water because of the small size of their landholdings were given the option to sell it to others needing it for their larger holdings. Experience has shown that external intervention in such situations produces particularly wholesome effect.

### **Bureaucratic Reorientation**

To the poor, however, even local authorities may at times appear as distant and semi-alien forces. Transforming bureaucracies from being controllers to being enablers has not been an easy task, but it is one which is absolutely urgent if participation is to have a real meaning for disadvantaged groups. Reforming bureaucracies requires organizational restructuring, simplified procedures, training and many other measures (Mathur 1989b). A learning process approach is an additional requirement. 'Bureaucratic reorientation' has been suggested by Korten and Uphoff (1981) as one way of adapting government agencies to the requirements of people-centered development. The Philippine National Irrigation Agency becoming participatory on a large-scale is the best documented case (Korten and Siy 1989; Bagadion and Korten 1991). Here the local people and a government agency took the lead in transforming what had been a typical top-down bureaucracy into a farmer-empowering bureaucracy. And this happened under Marcos' regime which was none to democratic. Such changes are occurring in other places too.

In India, several efforts at bureaucratic reorientation with a view to making governmental agencies more participative are currently underway. The Joint Forest Management Programme in West Bengal has attracted considerable attention (Poffenberger and McGean: 1996). Traditionally, foresters and communities that live in forests have been sworn enemies, forest officials viewing the forest people as destroyers of forests and the forest people viewing forest officials as their worst exploiters denying them even the basic right to eke out a meagre living

in a harsh environment of dwindling forests. Things, however, are now beginning to change. Over the past decade, the Forest Department has worked with thousands of tribal and other communities to establish local management systems to protect and regenerate degraded natural forests throughout the south western corner of the state. Over 200 rural communities currently manage 250,000 hectares of natural sal (*Shorea robusta*) forest, which has produced luxuriant growth since villagers began controlling grazing, fuelwood cutting, and forest fires. These regenerating forests now generate a wide variety of medicinal, fiber, fodder, fuel and food products for participating rural communities. One researcher recently reported: 'Joint forest management is a new approach to dealing with agency-community conflicts and deforestation. From a management perspective it differs fundamentally from traditional custodial and production systems in terms of its organizational, legal, and technical requirements' (Poffenberger 1990: 13).

The above examples contradict the view that participation and government interests are antagonistic forces. It is eventually possible for technically-oriented and conventional public agencies to change into organizations using more people-centred strategies. The assumption that government agencies can never play a constructive role at the local level is not tenable.

### **Government-NGO Relationships**

Both government and NGOs are important players on the development scene. The way they relate to each other is crucial to the success of participatory development. But nowhere does this partnership proceed in a totally trouble-free manner (Farrington and Bebbington 1993: Heyzer and Riker 1995). Based on his study of NGOs in Asia, Bowden (1990: 147) observed: 'The conflict exists at the working levels of government in virtually all countries. Even countries where the political and top administrative echelons are supportive of the NGO sector (India and Sri Lanka for instance), large segments of the field administration resent NGOs.'

Many NGOs genuinely believe that they are constituted differently from the government. They think that they are the ones most concerned about the fate of the poor, the women, the indigenous groups—the people at the bottom of the heap, weak and unorganized. Some NGOs see

poverty and inequality as resulting from governmental policies and actions. Their participatory approach, especially in its empowerment form, then tends to be viewed with apprehension as subversive or revolutionary ideology by dominant groups in closer relationships with the government agencies.

What these NGOs often forget is that their rhetoric of development is not altogether new or all their own. They alone are not pro-poor and the phraseology they employ to project their participatory stance is not a recent discovery. The NGO language of development is also spoken by many governments. Pandey (1991: 245) noted the commonalities: 'Sometimes, for example, there is hardly any difference between a speech by the Prime Minister and a speech by an environmentalist . . . They have achieved vocal equality. Rhetoric, assertion, ideas and phrases of social activists now often decorate government brochures and the documents of the Planning Commission.'

NGOs with views markedly different from governments' prefer to keep away from the official agencies. Commitment to conscientization and organization of the poor comes in their way of working with them. Their apprehension is that government funds come with strings attached and this can jeopardize their autonomy, especially when it comes to tackling structural issues. In fact, some NGOs do not wish to collaborate with the government at all for fear that it might be construed as their support to a development agenda which they oppose. NGOs with a confrontational outlook expect governments to be hostile to them. Some ways they see as overregulating their activity include: cumbersome NGO registration, slow approval of NGO projects, insistence that NGO funding be additional to an aid agency's, regular progress reports on activities, and so on. They find that a more subtle method employed to neutralize the NGO leadership is cooption. Providing funds is one way to reduce the autonomy of NGOs. Often NGO leaders are appointed on state policy making bodies and committees. These are the opportunities that NGOs can use to influence government policies. In actual fact, however, they are unable to do much (Tandon 1989).

The relationship is not always so marked by strains. In most cases, NGOs and government agencies have achieved considerable understanding of each other's viewpoint and are playing a role which is mutually supportive (Paul 1988). In India the government is liberal in

its support to NGOs and their activities (Fernandez 1987: 39-40). The Council for Advancement of People's Action for Rural Technology (CAPART) is one central agency established with the aim of channelling funds to NGOs. There are many sectors of development activity where government actually encourages NGOs to take an active part. NGOs are associated with the policy making process too. A commission on self-employed women which government set up in 1986 was headed by Ela Bhatt of SEWA. It produced a powerful report, 'Shramshakti: Report of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector'.

Governments recognize the particular strengths of NGOs in reaching the poor and are increasingly turning to them as a resource supplemental to their own. NGO assistance is being sought in training programmes for government officials. Governments are keen to learn from their experiences and already have adopted many of the NGO ideas in their programmes. In India, the Amul Dairy Cooperative provided the model for the government's National Dairy Development Programme, known as 'Operation Flood' (Paul 1988: 68-69). The use of part-time village health workers developed at an NGO Rural Health Project in Jamkhed, led to a government scheme for community health workers (Hardiman 1986: 68-69). Roy (1987: 459) cites several examples of NGO activities which have a policy implication and which can also be easily incorporated in government programmes.

### **NGOs and Donor Organizations**

NGOs are rich in human resources; they are able to work successfully among the world's poorest communities only because a group of motivated workers provides the required support. But they lack money, an equally important resource for all development work. It is not possible to generate enough financial resources internally as the local communities are in no position to contribute sufficient amounts of money. Hence the attractiveness of donor organizations for NGOs. For their wealth of experience in promoting participation in development at the local level, the attractiveness of NGOs for donor organizations should also be nothing less. In fact, they both need each other.

However, the track record of interaction between NGOs and development agencies has not been very impressive. As Cernea (1989:

128), drawing from his World Bank experience, put it: 'There are not many fully successful experiences: there are quite a few failures and missed opportunities; and new approaches are ongoing and still being tested. A good deal of the territory is till simply uncharted.'

NGOs feel that the kind of collaboration with donors that should help accelerate local level involvement in development activities does not exist. A number of irritants which they confront in seeking funding support include:

1. The bureaucratic procedures of processing requests for funding assistance are complicated and time-consuming. Small, and new NGOs, simply give up the effort, also because they do not know how to convince donors about their capacity to undertake projects. The donor procedures (and perhaps policies too) seem to favour the big and established NGOs which leads to jealousies among local action groups.
2. NGOs require long-term commitment of funds to be able to make their plans but funds are approved on project basis for a limited period. The sustainability of many of their initiatives which they plan keeping a long-term time-frame in view becomes doubtful due to this dependence on uncertain sources of funding.
3. Projects funded by donors carry certain conditions. NGOs fear that in carrying out such projects their goals could be submerged beneath those of the aid agency.
4. To stay in step with changing fashions in the world of development, the donor priorities keep changing. It becomes difficult for NGOs to incorporate new interests in their work programme.
5. Equality does not seem to be the basis of relationship in NGO-donor cooperative efforts. The patronizing attitude of aid agencies, the NGOs in particular, creates resentment among southern NGOs.
6. Donor expectations from NGOs add further to their woes. Donors expect genuine democracy, managerial competence and economic viability. More specifically, they require formal constitutions, elected committees, registered membership, professional staff, proper accounting and distribution of benefits. One major

condition for funding support is submission of formal project proposals which many NGOs, lacking relevant skills, are unable to produce.

Supporting the NGO initiatives is a new experience for donors as well. They also find deficiencies in NGO operations, particularly in the management of external funds. It is not easy for them to deal with hundreds of diverse NGOs operating thousands of miles away. Donors are now developing new approaches and methods that will improve their working relationship with NGOs (Bebbington and Riddle 1994)

Some of the new approaches and methods being considered to extend assistance to NGOs more effectively involve changes in funding mechanisms. Funding to NGOs through regular government channels has been the general practice, but donors are now veering round to the view that providing direct grants would be a better alternative. This will not only increase speed and flexibility in the use of funds but will also be effective in reaching and supporting innovative approaches to local development. In fact, UNDP through the Partners in Development Programme is already making grants for direct support to NGOs for community-based participatory development activities. Sixty countries participate in the programme which made more than 400 grants between 1987 and 1990 (Marc 1992: 126).

Donors' interest in NGOs is however on the upswing. Most donor organizations have begun establishing relations with NGOs in a systematic manner. In the World Bank, a World Bank-NGO Committee was established in 1982. The division in the Bank with overall responsibility for relations with NGOs is the External Affairs Department's International Economic Relations Division (EXTIE) (World Bank 1990). To advance collaboration further with NGOs, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has an IFAD/NGO Extended Cooperation Programme (Alamgir 1989: 12).

It is, in fact, this interest in collaborating with NGOs which has been a significant factor contributing to the rise of NGOs to their present position. Opportunities are growing for NGOs to work in tandem with donor organizations in helping people improve the quality of their life. The World Bank is encouraging involvement of NGOs in the activities it

supports. Donor support has been vital to the launching of many innovative participatory projects.

The main interest of donor organizations in NGOs is that they offer an approach to reaching the poorest in society, involving them in the development process and seeing that benefit accrues to them. The success in organizing people at the community level is their particular strength which the donor agencies are anxious to use in their own projects. Until recently, the main source of feedback on operations in distant countries for donors was the information they got from their visiting missions. In direct touch with the local level situation, NGOs happen to be better placed to provide vivid accounts of what really is happening out there.

The way the partnership between donors and NGOs has worked so far will however need to be strengthened, if people at the local level have to be involved in the development process. One successful example of cooperation in this direction is provided by the Cebu Upland Project, a Philippine-German effort. It is one of the rare cases in which a whole project management team—both nationals and expatriates—tries to reflect on their approach, tasks and activities from the point of view of participation, and in mutual collaboration (Kievelitz 1992). There, of course, cannot be a single answer to this complex issue. A continuing dialogue, in the beginning stages now, offers the best chance.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Participatory development now has its adherents worldwide. Whether this approach is desirable or not is no longer an issue amongst the social actors concerned—government agencies, NGOs, international development institutions, the people and their communities themselves. They may have reasons of their own to become involved in such efforts, but there is much that is common to their concerns.

More and more successful participatory experiences are now coming to light. However, most of these interventions occur not as part of any broader policy on participation but represent sporadic local action. For example, in Paliganj Distributory Canal in Sone Canal System, Bihar, some significant improvements occurred with the formation of a Farmers' Committee and its involvement in distribution, maintenance

and other related activities. This however was entirely a local initiative. As Vermillion (1992: 8) observed:

This experiment, admirably attempted in a challenging environment, is in need of a larger framework. Rather than occurring as part of an overall state policy and strategic plan, this action experiment arose as a locally induced initiative. To sustain it and encourage dissemination, a more systematic policy and comprehensive programme will be needed at the state level.

Development agencies also need strengthening in their use of socio-cultural inputs needed for inducing participation. Anthropologists and sociologists who can lend a helping hand still remain on the periphery. At a recent World Bank workshop on participatory development, one participant frankly confessed: 'Organizational development is not a recognised profession in the Bank; sociologists and other social scientists are naturally more oriented towards participation' (Lahiri and Wicklin 1992: 82).

The value system of planning bureaucracies and in administration down the line tends to filter out socio-cultural information from planning and management processes. Without a change in the orientation of bureaucracies, the likelihood of socio-cultural knowledge influencing development decisions remains remote (UNESCAP/UNDP 1992: 125).

The lack of sufficient operational know-how continues to be a serious obstacle to the pursuit of participation-oriented development. There is no one model or one way of stimulating participatory development. In India, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) has made some efforts to develop manuals and literature on participatory organizing, but much more remains to be done (Brown and Korten 1989: 13). Research reveals that 'methodologically participation is still largely in a period of experimentation' (Oakley 1991: 205). Yet, it is important that the pace of participatory development does not slacken. In many cases, this may be the only way out to achieve equitable and sustainable development. As a recent study, arguing for a participatory approach to the management of common property resources, emphatically stated: 'There exist, however, certain situations in which it is still the only one that will work. Taking into account the track record of alternative



models in both poverty alleviation and environmental preservation, it seems well worth giving a chance to this new institution on a wider scale' (Chopra et al 1990: 144).

## REFERENCES

- Alamgir, Mohiuddin. 1989. 'Participatory Development: The IFAD Experience', in William P. Lineberry (ed). *Assessing Participatory Development: Rhetoric Versus Reality*, pp. 3-18. Boulder, San Francisco and London: Westview Press.
- Allen, Tim. 1990. 'Putting People First Again: Non-Government Organizations and the "New Orthodoxy" for Development', *Disasters* 14 (1): 67-68.
- Alliband, Terry. 1983. *Catalysts of Development: Voluntary Agencies in India*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Arole, M. And R. Arole. 1975. 'A Comprehensive Rural Health Project in Jamkhed (India)', in K.W. Newell (ed). *Health by the People*, pp. 70-90. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- Bagadion, Benjamin U. and Frances F. Korten. 1991. 'Developing Irrigators' Organizations: A Learning Process Approach', in Machael M Cernea (ed). *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development* (Second Edition Revised and Expanded), pp. 73-112. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bandyopadhyay, Jayanta and Vandana Shiva. 1987. 'Chipko: Rekindling India's Forest Culture', *Ecologist*, January and February 1987.
- Bebbington, A., R. Riddell and D. Davis. 1994. *Developing Country NGOs and Donor Governments*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Best, John. 1990. 'Rajasthan, India: Building on Conviction: How a Small NGO Works at Village Level and Attempts to Avoid Creating Dependence', *University of Reading AERRD Bulletin*, 28 February: 25-29.
- Bhasin, Kamla. 1983. *Breaking Barriers: A South Asian Experience of Training for Participatory Development*. Rome: FAO of the United Nations.
- Bhatt, Anil. 1987. 'The Social and Political Dimensions of Administering Development in India', in John C. Ickis, Edilberto de Jesus and Rishikesh Maru (eds). *Beyond Bureaucracy: Strategic Management of Social Development*, pp. 102-115. West Hartford CT: Kumarian Press.
- Bhatnagar, Bhuvan and Aubrey C. Williams (eds). 1992. *Participatory Development and the World Bank*. Washington DC: The World Bank (Discussion Paper 183).
- Bowden, Peter. 1990. 'NGOs in Asia: Issues in Development', *Public Administration and Development*, 10: 141-152.
- Brown, L. David and David C. Korten. 1989. *Understanding Voluntary Organizations: Guidelines for Donors* (PPR Working Paper 248). Washington DC: The World Bank.
- Calman, Leslie J. 1992. *Toward Empowerment: Women and Movement Politics in India*. Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press.
- Cernea, Michael M.. 1983. *A Social Methodology for Community Participation in Local Investments: The Experience of Mexico's PIDER Program*. (Staff Working Paper No 598). Washington DC: The World Bank.
- . 1987. 'Farmer Organizations and Institution Building for Sustainable Development', *Regional Development Dialogue*, 8 (2): 1-9
- . 1989. 'Nongovernmental Organizations and Local Development', *Regional Development Dialogue*, 10 (2): 117-142.

- . 1990. 'Putting People First: Social Science Knowledge for Development Interventions', in Hari Mohan Mathur (ed.). *The Human Dimension of Development: Perspectives from Anthropology*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Co.
- . 1991a. 'Participation: Editor's Note', in Michael M. Cernea (ed.). *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development* (Second edition revised and expanded) New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 1991b. 'The Social Actors of Participatory Afforestation Strategies', in Michael M. Cernea (ed.). *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development*. (Second edition revised and expanded). New York: Oxford University.
- . 1992. *The Building Blocks of Participation: Testing Bottom-up Planning*. Washington DC: The World Bank (Discussion Paper 166)
- . 1993. 'Culture and Organization: The Social Sustainability of Induced Development', *Sustainable Development* 1 (2): 18-29.
- Chambers, Robert. 1983. *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*. London: Longman.
- Chopra, Kanchan, Gopal K. Kadekodi and M. N. Murty. 1990. *Participatory Development: People and Common Property Resources*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Dawson, Penny and Janie Uhrig. 1983. 'They Don't Need to Read and Write: 2 Health Workers among 2000 Sherpas', *Future* (Second Quarter).
- De Silva, G. V. S., W. Haque, N. Mehta, Md. A. Rahman and P. Wignaraja. 1988. *Towards a Theory of Rural Development*. Lahore: Progressive Publishers.
- Drabek, Anne Gordon (ed). 1987. *Development Alternatives, The Challenge for NGOs*. Oxford: Pergamon Press (Supplement to World Development Vol 15 Autumn 1987).
- Durning, Alan B. 1989. 'Mobilizing at the Grassroots', in Lester Brown et al (eds). 1989. *State of the World 1989*, pp. 154-73. Washington DC: Wordwatch Institute.
- Esman, Milton J. and Norman T. Uphoff. 1984. *Local Organizations: Intermediaries in Rural Development*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- FAO. 1990. *Participation in Practice: Lessons from the FAO People's Participation Programme*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- Farrington, John and Anthony Bebbington, Kate Willard and David J. Lewis. 1993. *Reluctant Partners? Non-governmental Organizations, the State and Sustainable Agriculture Development*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fernandez, Aloysius P. 1987. 'NGOs in South Asia: People's Participation and Partnership', *World Development*, 15: 39-41. Supplement.
- Fowler, Alan. 1990. 'Doing it Better? Where and How NGOs have a "Comparative Advantage" in Facilitating Development', *University of Reading AERD Bulletin* 28, February 11-20.
- Franda, Marcus. 1979. *India's Rural Development: An Assessment of Alternatives*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Fugelsang, A. and D. Chandler. 1986. *Participation as Process. What Can We Learn from Grameen Bank*. Bangladesh. Oslo: NORAD.
- Gazelius, Helena and David Millwood. 1988. *NGOs in Development and Participation in Practice: An Initial Inquiry*. Stockholm: University of Stockholm (Department of Social Anthropology).
- Gazelius, Helena and David Millwood. 1986. 'Good Aid?', *Ideas and Action* 170 (5): 7-13.

- Ghai, Dharam. 1988. *Participatory Development: Some Perspectives from Grass-Roots Experiences*. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
- Gulhati, Ravi, Kaval Ravi, Ajai Mehra and Janaki Rajan. 1995. *Strengthening Voluntary Action*. New Delhi: Konark Publishers Pvt Ltd.
- Hakim, P. 1982. 'Lessons from Grassroots Development Experience in Latin America and the Caribbean'. *Assignment Children*, 59-60: 137-41.
- Hamilton, Susan. 1984. 'Participation and Ownership: Involving Resettled People in Project Implementation', in William L. Partridge (ed.). *Training Manual in Development Anthropology*. pp. 83-84. Washington DC: American Anthropological Association.
- Haque, Farhana. 1986. 'Bangladesh: A Participatory Approach in Stimulating Fisherwomen's Activities', *Ideas and Action*, 170 (5): 3-6.
- Hardiman, Margaret. 1986. 'People's Involvement in Health and Medical Care', in James Midgley, Anthony Hall, Margaret Hardiman and Dhanpaul Narine. 1986. *Community Participation, Social Development and the State*. pp. 45-6. London: Methuen & Co Ltd.
- Heyzer, Noeleen, James V. Riker and Antonio B. Quizon (eds). 1995. *Government - NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-centred Development*. Kuala Lumpur: Asia and Pacific Development Centre.
- Hyman, Herbert H., Gene N. Levine and Charles R. Wright. 1967. *Inducing Social Change in Developing Communities*. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
- Jaeger, D. 1986. 'Organizing the Framework for a Large and Small Scale Rural Policy', in Martyn Keith Kingdon Morris (ed.). *Rural Development for Poverty Alleviation* (Jubilee Symposium on the Effectiveness of Cooperation in Rural Development). pp. 53-68. Amsterdam: Foris Publications.
- Jain, L.C., B.V. Krishnamurthy and P.M. Tripathi. 1985. *Grass Without Roots: Rural Development Under Government Auspices*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Jazairy, Idriss, Mohiuddin Alamgir and Theresa Panuccio. 1992. *The State of the World Rural Poverty: An Inquiry into Its Causes and Consequences*. New York: New York University Press (Published for IFAD).
- Justice, Judith. 1986. *Policies, Plans and People: Culture and Health Development in Nepal*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Karat, Prakash. 1984. 'Action Groups/Voluntary Organizations: A Factor in Imperialist Strategy', *The Marxist*, 2 (21): 19-55.
- . 1988. *Foreign Funding and the Philosophy of Voluntary Organizations*. New Delhi: National Book Centre.
- Kievelitz, Uwe (ed.). 1992. *Participation in Project Cooperation: Its Possibilities, Forms, and Limits: A Case Example from the Philippines*. Bad Honnef: German Foundation for International Development.
- Korten, David C. and Norman Uphoff. 1981. *Bureaucratic Reorientation for Participatory Rural Development*. NASPAA Working Paper 1. Washington DC: National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration.
- Korten, Frances F. and Robert Y. Siy (eds). 1989. *Transforming a Bureaucracy: The Experience of the Philippine National Irrigation Administration*. Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Lahiri, Smita and Warren Van Wicklin. 1992. 'Working with Others', in Bhuvan Bhatnagar and Aubrey C. Williams (eds). *Participatory Development and the World Bank*, pp. 78-82. Washington DC: The World Bank Discussion Paper 183.

- Lewis, John P. 1988. 'Strengthening the Poor: Some Lessons for the International Community', in John P. Lewis (ed.). *Strengthening the Poor: What Have We Learned?* pp. 3-26. New Brunswick and Oxford: Transaction Books.
- Marsden, David. 1991. 'What is Community Participation?' in Richard C. Crook and Alf Morten Jerve (eds). *Government and Participation: Institutional Development, Decentralization and Democracy in the Third World*. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute.
- Marc, Alexander. 1992. 'Funding Mechanisms and Participation: A Brief Review of World Bank Experience and Related Issues', in Bhuvan Bhatnagar and Aubrey C. Williams (eds). *Participatory Development and the World Bank*, pp. 122-134. Washington DC: World Bank Discussion Paper 183.
- Mathur, Hari Mohan. 1982a. 'The Role of Anthropologists in Rural Development' *IFDA Dossier*, 27 (January- February): 43-46.
- . 1983. 'Reaching the Poor in Rural Areas: Development Issues and Administrative Requirements' in Hari Mohan Mathur and Helmut Palla (eds). *Local Administration and Regional Development*, pp. 207-244. Berlin: German Foundation for International Development / Kuala Lumpur: Asian and Pacific Development Centre.
- . 1986. *Administering Development in the Third World. Constraints and Choices*. New Delhi, Beverly Hills, London: Sage Publications.
- . 1989a. 'Government-administered Programmes for People-Centred Development', *Planning and Administration*, 16 (1): 40-51.
- . 1989b. *Anthropology and Development in Traditional Societies*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- . 1990. 'Providing People-Centered Development', in Mike Campbell and Arthur Hoyle (eds). *Government and People: Issues in Development*, pp. 188-207. Canberra: University of Canberra.
- . 1993. 'Human Development: The Sociocultural Context', *Cooperation and Development*, 2: 4-5.
- Oakley, Peter et al. 1991. *Projects with People: The Practice of Participation in Rural Development*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Ogun, Bilge and Karen Houston Smith. 1991. *Participatory Development*. (Summary Report. Innocenti Global Seminar, 21-29 May 1990). Florence: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.
- Pachauri, Saroj (ed). 1994. *Reaching India's Poor: Non-governmental Approaches to Community Health*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Pandey, Shashi Ranjan. 1991. *Community Action for Social Justice: Grassroots Organizations in India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Paul, Samuel. 1982. *Managing Development Programs: The Lessons of Success*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- . 1988. 'Governments and Grassroots Organizations: From Co-existence to Collaboration', in John P. Lewis (ed.). *Strengthening the Poor: What Have We Learned?* New Brunswick and Oxford: Transaction Books.
- Poffenberger, Mark. 1990. *Joint Forest Management in West Bengal: The Process of Agency Change*. (Sustainable Forest Management Working Paper No 9) New Delhi: Ford Foundation.
- Poffenberger, Mark and Betsy McGeen (eds). 1996. *Village Voices: Forest Choices: Joint Forest Management in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Prawl, Warren L. 1969. 'It's the Agents of Change Who Don't Like Change', *CERES: FAO Review*, 2 (4).
- Qureshi, Moeen A. 1992. *Reflections on Development: Issues Facing Developing Countries*. Washington DC: The World Bank.

- Racelis, Mary and Mattias Stieffel. 1990. *Putting the People First*. Paper prepared for the International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa, Arusha, Tanzania, February 1990.
- Rahman, Md. Anisur. 1981. *Some Dimensions of People's Participation in the Bhoomi Sena Movement* Geneva: UNRISD Participation Programme.
- . (ed.). 1984 *Grassroots Participation and Self-Reliance: Experiences in South and South East Asia*. New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing Co.
- Ralston, Lenora, James Anderson and Elizabeth Colson. 1983. *Voluntary Efforts in Decentralized Management: Opportunities and Constraints in Rural Development*. Berkeley: University of California (Institute of International Studies).
- Rose, Kalima. 1992. *Where Women are Leaders: The SEWA Movement in India*. London: Zed Books.
- Roy, Sanjit (Bunker). 1987. 'Voluntary Agencies in Development: Their Role, Policy and Programmes', *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 33 (3): 454-64.
- Sethi, Harsh. 1980. 'Alternative Development Strategies: A Look at Some Micro Experiments' in Kamla Bhasin and R. Vimla (eds). *Readings on Poverty, Politics and Development*, pp. 144-155. Rome: FAO of the UN (FFHC/AD).
- Shephard A., C. Fraser, and N. Khalimullah. 1986. 'NGOs in India: Aspects of the Current Debate', *Papers in the Administration of Development* No. 25. Birmingham: University of Birmingham (Development Administration Group).
- Shrivastava, Ginny. 1993. *Development of Microenterprises for Women: Women and Tendu Leaf Collection: A Case Study from Southern Rajasthan, India*. (Mimeo).
- Singh, Neera M. and Kundan K. Singh. 1993. 'Saving Forests for Posterity', *Down to Earth*, 2 (2): 25-28.
- Tandon, Rajesh. 1989. 'The State and Voluntary Agencies in Asia', in Richard Holloway (ed.). *Doing Development: Governments, NGOs and the Rural Poor in Asia*, pp. 13-29. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd.
- Tendler, Judith. 1982. *Turning Private Voluntary Organizations into Development Agencies: Questions for Evaluation*. (AID Programme Evaluation Discussion Paper No 12) Washington DC: USAID.
- Tilakaratna, S. 1987. *The Animator in Participatory Rural Development* Geneva: ILO.
- . 1991. 'The Role of the Animator', in Poona Wignaraja et al. (eds). *Participatory Development: Learning from South Asia*, pp. 223-252. Tokyo: United Nations University Press / Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programmes). 1993. *Human Development Report 1993*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- UNESCAP/UNDP. 1992. *Sociocultural Impact of Human Resources Development*. New York: United Nations (Publication No. ST/ESCAP/1169). Available from Social Development Division, ESCAP, United Nations Building, Bangkok, Thailand. (Entitled 'Sociocultural Factors in Human Resources Development' the study was prepared by Hari Mohan Mathur).
- Uphoff, Norman. 1989. *Approaches to Community Participation in Agriculture and Rural Development*. Washington DC: Economic Development Institute of the World Bank.
- . 1991. 'Fitting Projects to People', in Măchael M. Cernea (ed.). *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development*, pp. 467-511. (Second Edition) New York: Oxford University Press.

- Verghese, B.G. 1983. 'Voluntary Action: A New Mission for New Missionaries', in Terry Alliband. *Catalysts of Development: Voluntary Agencies in India*. West Hartford CT: Kumarian Press.
- Verma, M. C. 1993. *Role of NGOs: UN and Bilateral Aid*. Paper prepared for a meeting held under auspices of SID Delhi Chapter.
- Vermillion, Douglas L. 1992. 'Irrigation Management Turnover: Structural Adjustment or Strategic Evolution?' *IIMI Review*, (November): 3-12.
- Vettivel, Surendra K. 1992. *Community Participation: Empowering the Poorest: Roles of NGOs*. New Delhi: Vetri Publishers.
- Wignaraja, Poona. 1990. *Women, Poverty and Resources*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- World Bank, 1990. *How the World Bank Works with Nongovernmental Organizations*. Washington DC: The World Bank.

## SYMPOSIUM

### Newness in Sociological Enquiry

**Andre Beteille**

Department of Sociology, University of Delhi  
Delhi

#### I

Many of those who entered the profession of sociology in the last decade, as also those who are entering it today are dissatisfied with the existing state of the subject. They are eager to explore new ways of undertaking their work. The search for newness is of course central to science and scholarship, and an essential condition of their progress and even their continuing vitality. At the same time, nothing new emerges in the world of ideas out of a sheer desire for novelty: newness would amount to little if it did not arise from a careful, detailed and methodical scrutiny of existing knowledge—its concepts, methods and theories. It speaks well of a profession when its new entrants are out of sympathy with the mere mechanical reproduction of existing and available knowledge in their field. But that cannot justify the frantic search for novelty for its own sake. And if it be said that those who hunger for newness do not do so aimlessly, it can also be said that those who transmit accepted knowledge need not do so mechanically.

On an occasion like this, it is not enough to ask: how does newness begin? One must also ask how it becomes integrated into the practice of a discipline. This, I should stress, is a difficult issue, particularly in the early phase of a discipline's career when it may not at all be clear that what seems to have become established is going to last and must therefore provide a yardstick for the inclusion or exclusion of new components. At the same time, it will be unrealistic to expect that everything that is new, even if it appears sound, will be automatically

accepted and accommodated. The established practice of a discipline is itself a social fact, and I hardly need to remind this audience that social facts exercise their own constraints. It is well to remember that practices that are taken for granted in the discipline today did not get automatically incorporated into it without facing any resistance; I could give many examples from the work of sociologists of my generation and of the preceding one.

My main interest today is not in individual sociologists and their personal achievements, but in sociology as a discipline and a profession. Individual virtuosity has, and in my view ought to have, a smaller place in scholarship than, let us say, in jazz music. Most sociologists realize this, particularly as they advance in years, but young scholars find it hard to accept it, especially when they are highly talented. I do not wish to devalue the latter but only to point to the need for a proper appreciation of the relation between tradition and individual talent in sociology as in other branches of scholarship.

Sociology in India, as in many parts of the world, is in need of renewal. This much we can all agree upon without having to make dire predictions about the crises that are impending. Much of the work produced in the last two or three decades is of very poor quality. A great many things get published that do not deserve to be published, largely because we have failed to establish an honest, reliable and discriminating system of refereeing. In many colleges and universities, teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels is often perfunctory and sometimes dispensed with altogether. At the same time, some work of quality has been produced continuously in the last 50 years.

The problem with us is not that the small amount of good work done by preceding generations is unjustly criticized by succeeding ones, but that it is ignored and then quickly forgotten. In India, each generation of sociologists seems eager to start its work on a clean slate with little or no attention to the work done before. This amnesia about the work of their predecessors is no less distinctive of Indian sociologists than their failure to innovate. My main argument today is that the amnesia and the failure to innovate are two sides of the same coin; we will not be able to understand the one unless we understand the other. It would be rash for me to point my finger at anyone, for I know very well that someone else



can point his finger at me. I simply draw attention to this as an obdurate condition of our discipline and our profession with no intention of singling out any individual sociologist or group of sociologists for blame.

## II

I will now run quickly through some of the work produced by sociologists and social anthropologists in the recent past in India. My broad objective will be to see if any newness was introduced by this work and to ask, incidentally, how this newness came into being. Naturally, my treatment will be selective and illustrative, for it will be impossible—and also inappropriate—to attempt an exhaustive survey of research in the subject in India. Further, I will confine myself to the work done in the last 50 years, that is, since independence, without any judgement on the quality and significance of the work of earlier scholars.

The first thing to note is that there was a tremendous burst of work in the years immediately after independence, associated to some extent with the expansion of institutions of advanced study and research, namely, the universities and the newly-created institutes of research. The sheer volume of work in the first two or three decades after independence far exceeded what had been produced in the entire period before independence. Fifty years ago, sociology was still a young subject, and in retrospect, the scope for innovation appears to have been large. But of course, much of the work produced even then was stereotyped and trivial, and only a small part of it was of lasting value. In research, whether at the level of the individual scholar or the profession as a whole, most of what is done falls by the wayside and only a little endures; it is well to remember that research is in this sense a costly undertaking.

The first two decades after independence may be described as the great age of village studies. I am sure that the work of this period appears dull and uninspiring to those who are entering the profession today, but this is because the very success of that work led to its routinization in the 70s and eighties. That is not at all how it appeared to those of us who were entering the profession in the 50s and 60s before

the work became a part of established sociological practice. The first full-length monograph on an Indian village was published in 1955 by S. C. Dube (1955). I was still a student in the Department of Anthropology in Calcutta where everybody or almost everybody studied tribes. The new book, along with the two collections edited by Srinivas (1955) and by Marriott (1955), opened up new possibilities of research, and within a matter of years young social anthropologists, myself included, took up detailed and intensive studies of the Indian village which was at that time a whole new field of enquiry and investigation.

Village studies established not only a new domain of research, but also a new way of looking at Indian society and culture as a whole. Through a series of writings in the 50s and 60s, Srinivas (1962) established the distinction between the 'book-view' and the 'field-view' of Indian society, advocating the primacy of the latter over the former in sociological enquiry. The thrust in these studies was on life in the village as it was actually lived, and not on that life as it had been ideally conceived to be. The concept of the village as a harmonious and integrated unity was found grossly inadequate in the light of careful ethnographic studies. It gave way before accounts of the divisions visible everywhere and the conflicts of interest associated with them. Moreover, the idea of the village as a self-sufficient unit was replaced by one in which the many links of the village with the outside world were carefully examined and recorded.

Village studies were important in another way. They became for many sociologists and social anthropologists the basis for training in the craft of their discipline (Beteille and Madan 1975; Srinivas et al 1979). Sociology is an empirical discipline in which the observation, description, interpretation and analysis of facts is of central importance. In earlier accounts of Indian society and its institutions, facts were used for apt illustration rather than detailed and methodical enquiry. Village studies established high standards of enquiry through participant-observation. Unfortunately, similar standards were not established as extensively in survey research, the other principal mode of empirical investigation. It may even be argued that the standards of empirical investigation through participant-observation established in the 50s and 60s have tended to become somewhat relaxed over the years. In my own very limited personal experience, the few students from overseas whose

research I have supervised have produced better empirical work than the majority of their Indian counterparts.

The field-view of society transformed the study of caste. This had implications for the understanding of caste not only in the present but also in the past. Here, a landmark was the paper published by Srinivas in 1956 on '*Varna and Caste*' (reprinted in Srinivas 1962: 63-69). Srinivas argued that the operative units of the system were not the four categories of the idealized scheme of *varnas*, but the innumerable *jatis* which provided the real basis of social identity on the ground. Whereas the *varnas* were the same four throughout the country and throughout its history, the *jatis* varied from one region to another, and split, amalgamated, emerged anew or even disappeared over time. By closely examining the dynamics of caste, sociologists in the 50s and 60s were drawing attention to the declining role of caste in religion and ritual and its increasing role in politics. Here I ought to point out that sociologists were in advance of journalists who began to appreciate the great significance of caste in democratic politics only in the 80s and nineties.

One particular aspect of the dynamics of caste drew considerable attention among sociologists at first and then among students of Indian society and culture as a whole. This is the process whereby individual castes change their social rank after a change in their economic and political conditions. If one takes the book-view and sees castes as *varnas*, one gets a picture of a hierarchy that is completely frozen and static. If one takes the field-view and sees castes as *jatis*, one gets a picture of castes continually changing positions, although this is almost always a change in slow motion, not easy to detect in the particular case while it is taking place. This new representation of caste, with its own patterns of mobility, has encouraged historians and indologists to take a fresh look at their data relating to the past.

I have described two major shifts of perception brought about by sociological studies in the 50s and sixties. But there were also many minor shifts, too inconspicuous for attention in each individual case, whose cumulative effect has been considerable. As a result, our present understanding of family, kinship and marriage, of religious belief and practice, of local-level politics, and of economic arrangements and transactions is both richer and deeper than it was 50 years ago. Thus, newness in our discipline does not come about solely or even generally

through a sudden and dramatic breakthrough; more often it is the unforeseen consequence, over a long stretch of time, of collective effort that is at best loosely organized. What I wish to stress here is that someone may in fact contribute to newness in his discipline without himself being aware of it while making his contribution.

The work to which I briefly referred above, and particularly the enthusiasm for village studies and the field-view of society, created something like a community of scholars who actively influenced if not interacted with each other. Disciplinary boundaries became porous, and although sociologists and social anthropologists took the lead in village studies, they were joined by political scientists, historians, geographers, economists and others. It is also important to note that the community included Western as well as Indian scholars, and it will be false to say that the flow of ideas was only in one direction. Looking back on that experience, it can be said that indigenous and foreign scholars worked in more active and fruitful collaboration, and on more nearly equal terms, in the study of society and culture in India than perhaps in any other country in the world. What I would like to stress is that this collaboration, with all its strains and stresses, had become an established fact before the theorists of hegemony had had time to agonize over its moral and political implications.

### III

Thus, it is quite clear that some new ideas, new concepts and new approaches did emerge in the study of Indian society and culture in the last 50 years. But of course all of this was embedded in routines of study and research that were for the most part dull, monotonous and repetitive. Would it not be marvellous if we could henceforward dispense with the dull routine and simply get on with the pursuit of innovation? To someone who has chosen the vocation of scholarship, such a desire must appear both shallow and frivolous. In sociology, whether in India or in the West, we cannot achieve significant innovation if we disregard the routine of scholarship.

If we acknowledge that sociological knowledge is cumulative, it will be clear that the growth of that knowledge cannot be left solely to individual creativity. Every intellectual discipline is at the same time a

craft, with its own requirements of training and apprenticeship. The outgoing generation cannot teach the incoming one to be original, and it should not even try; but it does have the responsibility of handing down to it the traditions of its craft. By the traditions of a craft I mean something more than a set of technical procedures, important though they are, that can be acquired directly from the kind of manual that comes with the personal computer. These traditions are assimilated in and through the institutions, such as universities and centres of research, where the vocation of sociology is collectively practised.

It may be useful to pursue the metaphor of the craft a little further. Here I would like to refer very briefly to the work of Meyer Fortes who was an acknowledged authority in the field of kinship studies and whom I had the good fortune to know personally. Towards the end of his life, he wrote an account of his career which he called 'An Anthropologist's Apprenticeship'. Following the philosopher A. J. Ayer, he divided anthropologists into two types, the 'pontiffs' and the 'journeymen', saying that he himself was of the second and not the first type. The journeyman is devoted to his craft rather than to some grand creative project. Fortes (1978: 1-2) saw his own intellectual career thus:

A journeyman's eyes are on his material, not on higher things. His aim is to turn out a particular product at a time using the best tools at his disposal. What he has by way of skill and technique are directed strictly to the job in hand, to making the most of the material he has to work with in the light of whatever good ideas happen to be appropriate to his task.

It was through work done in this spirit that he made his most significant contribution to his discipline; and he did in fact bring much newness into the study of kinship.

I had of course read some of Fortes's writings as a student in Calcutta in the 50s for he was then already an established scholar. When I came to know him many years later, I naturally tried to find out from him what he considered his most significant contribution to social anthropology. But I never got very far. He somehow managed to turn the discussion around to Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown who had been his teachers or to younger persons who had been his pupils. He was by no means

approving of all the work they had done, for as a man and a scholar, he was of a critical, not to say a carping, disposition, but till the end he kept himself informed about the work being done in his field. He read everything, took out whatever little he found to be of value, and attacked the rest relentlessly; in this attack, he spared neither his teachers nor his pupils. He always spoke respectfully of his seniors, even those who had entered the field only a few years ahead of him, but he had an unforgiving hostility towards those who sought to project themselves as pontiffs, *mahants* or creative geniuses.

Like N. K. Bose, my teacher in Calcutta, Meyer Fortes believed that anthropology was a science. What place can tradition have in the work of the scientist? It is easy to be misled by the antithesis between tradition and modernity into the belief that the progress of science must take place wholly outside of tradition. The falsity of this belief becomes immediately apparent if we look at the experimental sciences where no one can hope to achieve significant results without first acquiring the culture or the tradition of the laboratory in which he is initiated into his craft. It is true that this tradition can become a constraint and an obstacle to further progress; it is also true that individuals emerge from time to time who reconstitute the tradition of their science; but today no individual genius can begin to do this without first mastering the existing tradition of his craft.

While no intellectual discipline can dispense with apprenticeship in its craft, the form and duration of this apprenticeship varies from one discipline to another. I am told that in the experimental sciences, a Ph. D degree is no longer enough, a young scientist has now to do an additional spell as a 'post-doc' in the laboratory of a mature scientist before he can strike out on his own. In our discipline, the conditions of apprenticeship are somewhat different, and sometimes they appear excessively lax and permissive. The requirements of Ph. D work as a form of apprenticeship are not always taken seriously by either the student or his supervisor. It is natural that a fresh entrant into the Ph. D programme should be eager to make a breakthrough in his discipline, and so he tends to choose somewhat grandiose topics for his dissertation. It is then his supervisor's responsibility to bring him down to earth, to explain to him that the ground must first be prepared before any significant contribution can be made, and that this preparation is a slow

and laborious process. In our universities today, this responsibility is seen more often in its breach than in its observance.

In India, the apprenticeship that is indispensable to the formation of the sociologist is subverted by a variety of factors. Professional standards are not sufficiently well established to discourage work of poor or even very poor quality. There is inadequate attention to detail in the collection and arrangement of empirical material, and the data collected through both participant-observation and survey research are often insubstantial and unreliable. Concepts are not always clearly defined or rigorously applied, and frequently what is presented as a new concept is only a new term. Arguments of the most sweeping kind are dressed up as new arguments, without any firm support of either data or reasoning.

If the craft of sociology had been well developed, there would be some check against this. In its absence, technical requirements are easily set aside in the interest of social relevance. Many sociologists, both young and old, feel that the real problem is not to interpret the world, but to change it. Changing the world is indeed a noble objective, but it is doubtful how many of us have the intellectual tools for making that change. In the first two decades of independence, many sociologists and social anthropologists expected to contribute to social transformation by working through the government in such fields as rural reconstruction, community development, Panchayati Raj, and so on. The Planning Commission was then the mecca for social scientists working for the transformation of society. Then a disenchantment with what could be done through the government set in, and in the 80s and 90s, many found a new appeal in programmes of active intervention through voluntary or non-governmental organizations. There is of course no reason why sociologists should not work with either the government or non-governmental organizations if they are convinced that their work will be made more socially relevant in that way. But they must first ensure that they have, *as sociologists*, the technical equipment required for attending effectively to the problems set before them by the agencies with which they work. Some of this equipment can be improvised on the job, but not all of it.

Someone who values autonomy in intellectual pursuit must be mindful not only of his own individual autonomy but also of the

autonomy of his profession. Professor P. C. Mahalanobis, one of the most influential intellectuals of independent India, is reported to have said, on being provoked by Nehru, that 'scientists should be on top, not on tap'. Today most young sociologists will perhaps agree that they should not be on tap for ready use by agencies of the government. But many of the same persons seem to believe that their profession has a tacit obligation to meet the demands of Leninists, feminists, environmentalists, eco-feminists and other promoters of radical social change. Professional integrity requires some measure of autonomy from both government and opposition.

#### IV

Of those who say that it is desirable, at least initially, to work within a tradition of scholarship, one might well ask whether there is indeed an established tradition of sociological enquiry in India. One might point to certain distinctive features of the tradition in France, in Germany, or in the United States. But if such a tradition exists in India, its essential ingredients are by no means clear to everyone. One might say at best that there are several and diverse traditions, with little or no agreement on their relative merits, so that one has to pick one's way through a thicket of terms, concepts, techniques and procedures; and in the end rely mainly on improvisation. This is by no means a happy state of affairs, but such, according to many, is indeed the current state of sociology in India.

Why have Indian sociologists, despite continuous effort for three quarters of a century, failed to develop firm traditions for the systematic study of society and its institutions? Many would say that this is because they have depended too heavily on borrowed theories, borrowed concepts and borrowed methods of enquiry. This is true to a greater or lesser extent of all branches of modern science and scholarship in India, but it manifests itself in a particularly acute form in the discipline of sociology. For several generations, Indian sociologists have agonized over the mismatch between the concepts and methods on which they draw from the common pool of their discipline and the data to which they seek to apply them. That this mismatch is widespread and pervasive can hardly be denied. Moreover, it is a good thing that we should be



troubled and concerned about it, provided that our worry does not lead to paralysis in the practice of our craft.

The fact that most of the basic tools of sociological enquiry and analysis used in the study of Indian society and culture were devised outside India does not disturb all Indian sociologists equally. Some would say that one should use such tools as are available, adapt them to one's use as well as one can, and improvise to the extent possible. Whether we engage in participant-observation or in survey research, the basic procedures have to be broadly the same everywhere, so why worry about where or by whom they were first devised? Again, there are broadly similar concepts and methods for interpreting and analysing social stratification and mobility, family, kinship and marriage, religious belief and practice, political processes, and economic transactions wherever they exist and operate, and we would be foolish to turn our backs on the available concepts and methods in the hope of devising new ones by our own unaided effort. Why, they would ask, try to reinvent the bicycle?

But perhaps the majority continue to be disturbed by the mismatch between the tools available to them and the material on which they have to work, and they seem to oscillate between two alternative courses. The first course is to work within the system, keeping the mind open to the possibility of small, incremental changes in the hope that the cumulative effect of such work by many scholars over several generations will lift the subject to a higher plane theoretically and methodologically. This probably is how most of us work, in the spirit of the journeyman, although few of us can reasonably hope to achieve the success of Meyer Fortes to whose work I earlier referred.

The second response is articulated by a smaller number of persons, but they are more radical and more assertive. Their views raise echoes in the minds of many scholars, particularly in the younger generation, and therefore deserve attention. They assert that the poverty of our social theory follows inevitably from our unreflective adherence to a framework of enquiry and analysis that is altogether inappropriate. Working within the framework leads to its further entrenchment and to a continuing dissipation of intellectual energy. They call for a replacement of the established framework with its entire baggage of concepts, methods and procedures by an alternative sociology or, even, an

alternative to sociology. In this view, if I were to put it starkly, newness does not emerge bit by bit, it has to be created all at once.

What is to be the shape of this new, alternative sociology? Naturally, there are different voices that seek to express different views and impulses. These voices are more agreed about what is to be set aside than about what is to be put in its place. One source of this call for the rejection of the existing framework is radical Marxism which has trained its guns on 'bourgeois sociology' for nearly a century. Another source of it, more specific to our intellectual climate, is radical nationalism whose target is Western, rather than bourgeois, sociology. In our contemporary context, the second source is more potent than the first one, although of course the two may be combined, either consciously or unconsciously.

The search for alternatives to existing theories, concepts, methods, procedures and techniques will no doubt continue, for that search is a part of intellectual life everywhere. It will lead to the opening up of new areas of substantive enquiry, as it has already done in the last couple of decades in gender studies, in environmental sociology and in the sociology of science. The real question is how this search will connect itself with the existing body of knowledge that has already accumulated. I am not convinced that a radical disconnection between what has been done in the past and what is to be done in the future is either feasible or desirable. Those who wish to create a whole new alternative sociology will no doubt go their way, at least for some time, but my instincts tell me that their work too will in due course of time either fall by the wayside or fall in line. Experience shows that the idea of paradigm shift is operationally less useful in the social than in the natural sciences.

The discontent with existing approaches and the search for radically new alternatives has had paradoxical consequences. It has led able scholars into extreme forms of the very weaknesses they attack most mercilessly in others. It is doubtful that we will ever be able to lay to rest the ghosts of 'bourgeois sociology' and 'Western sociology', and the attacks against them are often misdirected, and they backfire with unfailing regularity.

Twenty-five years ago, *Seminar* magazine devoted one of its issues to the discussion of the social sciences, and in particular to the demands of quality and of relevance within them. In a forceful article on 'The Question of Relevance', P. C. Joshi pointed out that 'the lack of

relevance of social sciences constitutes one of the key problems in many underdeveloped countries including India' (1972: 24). He questioned 'the relevance of the entire Western intellectual heritage to the underdeveloped countries', and attacked the 'mere borrowing and transfer of knowledge from the Western to the non-Western world' (Ibid.). However, he then proceeded in the main part of his article to give a vivid exposition of the views of four major thinkers, Gunnar Myrdal, Wassily Leontief, J. K. Galbraith and Simon Kuznets, all acknowledged Western authorities. Apart from a brief and passing show of deference to Gandhi and Mao, there was no discussion of any Indian or other Asian social scientist.

These contradictions reveal themselves in discussions not only of research but also of teaching. In a paper on the teaching of economics in India published some ten years ago, Sukhamoy Chakravarty drew attention to the many shortcomings in the existing practice (1986: 1165-68). These he attributed to three main factors: the extensive use of texts written outside India, the pervasive desire among Indian economists to catch up with the West, and the generally lackluster quality of Indian teachers of the subject. The essay provides a very scholarly exposition of the ideas of the world's leading authorities on the subject, but there is no discussion of the work of any Indian economist. Reading the paper one might justly wonder what there is to teach to students of economics in India other than the works of those European and American authors to whom Chakravarty gives his exclusive attention. He does mention that there are some important exceptions to the generally poor quality of Indian economists, but he does not tell us who they are, or, more importantly, what makes them exceptional. How can we begin to raise the level of the subject in India if we pay such scant regard to even the important exceptions among the four or five generations of economists who have taught and written about the subject in India?

It is evident that the ablest among our social scientists are unable to discuss the works of Western authorities without a sense of guilt. That is understandable and not necessarily undesirable, but unfortunately the sense of guilt is almost always overlaid by a thick coat of self-righteousness. We are too quick to throw stones all around without paying any heed to the glass houses we erect for our own habitation.

We have all encountered some advocates of autonomy and self-reliance who quote extensively from the works of Western scholars: promoters of new alternatives who are never too shy with their references to Foucault and Derrida. If there is nothing wrong in borrowing from Malinowski and Parsons, there should be nothing wrong in borrowing from Foucault and Derrida; but this must be understood on both sides. The adoption of new ideas can be healthy and fruitful only if it does not lead to a complete disregard of what was going on before. It is here that we find the weakest link in the chain. Every new generation of Indian sociologists acts as if nothing had gone on before; it does not ask what its own fate will be when another new generation takes its place.

Being attentive to what has been done before does not require one to close one's mind to new ideas. One should pursue the search for ideas according to one's interest and inclination, and not be unduly concerned over the intrinsic worth of the places in which others are pursuing their search. One should be prepared to look for new ideas wherever they may be found, and some of the best scholars I have known have been diligent scavengers, retrieving very good ideas from other people's dustbins. But it is not enough to find new material; we must then undertake the slow and laborious effort of finding a place for it in the existing practice of the discipline. Only then will that practice change in a significant way.

### NOTE

This is a revised version of the inaugural lecture given at the seminar on 'Recasting Sociology' at the Jawaharlal Nehru University on 20 March 1997.

### REFERENCES

- Beteille, Andre, and T. N. Madan (eds). 1975. *Encounter and Experience*. New Delhi: Vikas.
- Chakravarty, Sukhamoy. 1986. 'The Teaching of Economics in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*. 21 (27): 1165-68.
- Dube, S. C. 1955. *Indian Village*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Fortes, Meyer. 1978. 'An Anthropologist's Apprenticeship', *Annual Review of Anthropology*.
- Joshi, P. C., 1972. 'The Question of Relevance', *Seminar*, 157 (September).
- Marriott, McKim (ed.). 1955. *Village India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Srinivas, M. N. (ed.). 1955. *India's Villages*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- . 1962. *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*. Bombay: Asia.
- Srinivas, M. N., A. M. Shah and E. A. Ramaswamy (eds). 1979. *The Fieldworker and the Field*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

## Book Reviews

Beth Roy. 1996. *Some Trouble With Cows: Making Sense of Social Conflict*. New Delhi: Vistaar Publications. Pp. 231.

Much has been written on inter-communal relations in both pre-as well as post-1947 India, but of the relations between various religious groups, particularly between Hindus and Muslims, in Pakistan and Bangladesh, little is known. This book, is, in some sense, a pioneering effort to explore the dynamics of Hindu-Muslim relations in the early years of the newly-formed state of Pakistan.

Roy's fascinating account revolves around the case of a single Hindu-Muslim clash that broke out sometime in 1954 in a remote village in the Faridpur district of what was then East Pakistan. It all began when a cow belonging to a 'low' caste Namasudra Hindu wandered off into a field owned by a Muslim peasant and destroyed part of his standing crop. Within two days, this had led to such great tension that 'tens of thousands' of men, Hindus, on the one side and Muslims on the other, fought each other in a pitched battle in which scores were badly injured. Roy provides a stage-by-stage account of how a sleepy little hamlet was suddenly turned into a bloody battlefield over a harmless incident.

The chief merit of the book does not lie in the story of the riot itself, for, compared to the bloody pogroms that India has witnessed in recent years, this little incident pales into insignificance. Rather, what is particularly fascinating is Roy's 'adventures in methodology'. The entire story is built up by piecing together oral narratives collected from various people—witnesses, participants and others. In doing this, she brings out most strikingly the crucial role that respondents' social location in terms of caste, religion, age, class and gender, have in shaping stories of significance to their own worlds. These should not be dismissed simply because they may not be termed 'objective' accounts. Rather, such 'subjective' oral histories are valuable in themselves, as Roy so brilliantly shows, in that they provide crucial clues and insights into the dynamics of community-identity construction and the ways in which people come to identify themselves in opposition to people who come to be seen as different from them.

Critically examining various oral narratives about the riot, Roy charts what could be called the career of the clash as passing through the distinct phases of quarrel, decision to riot, actual violence, intervention and resolution. In each of these phases she focuses on the perceptions of various people who were either themselves involved in the riot or for whom knowledge of the riot has become an integral part of communal memory. Bringing into serious question the commonly-held theories of communalism as being simply a manifestation of some primitive aggressive urge or undistilled 'false consciousness' alone, Roy convincingly shows that the phenomenon must also be seen in terms of human agency and people's own perceptions of the situations which they construct and confront.

**Yoginder Sikand**

Royal Holloway  
University of London  
London

Dennis E. Mithaug. 1996. *Equal Opportunity Theory*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications. Pp. vii+275. \$52. 00

The stark reality of inequality and the cherished value of equality have been the foci of scholarly attention for more than a century and a half. Within sociology itself, 'inequality' has been so much studied and 'equality' so much debated that one can hardly expect original insights to emerge from any study of (in)equality today. So, when Dennis Mithaug claims to have said something 'new' in this book one is tempted to read it.

The book is essentially theoretical; Mithaug's primary objective is to resolve 'the discrepancy between the right and the experience of self-determination', which, according to him, is rooted in 'the lack of capacity and opportunity among individuals whose personal, social and economic circumstances are beyond their control' (p.1). Such individuals become victims in 'a cycle of decline' that weakens their capacity to experience self-determination.

Mithaug's work in the area of 'special education' has influenced his theory and his reformist zeal lends it a programmatic element. Collective

action for social redress which he proposes emphasizes the optimization of prospects for self-determination among the less well situated individuals ' . . . by improving their capacity for autonomous thought and action, by improving the opportunities for effective choice and action, and by optimizing the match between individual capacity and social opportunity by eliminating obstacles and constructing opportunity that encourage more frequent expressions of self-determination (p. 2)

Thus the newness in Mithaug book is not in the theory *per se*, but in the programme for social redress derived from it. The fact that the author's ameliorative programme is outlined with the American experience in mind is hardly of import to the reader. The value of his work lies in the way he derives normative insights from an analysis of the available theoretical perspectives on (in)equality.

Using a broad brush, Mithaug sketches the evolution of the modern ideal of 'freedom as right' from the ancient practice of 'freedom as power'. He shows how the link between the ancient practice and the modern ideal colours the ideologies of equal opportunity today. He describes two conditions that have affected the development of social redress for the least advantaged persons in this century. They are, (a) a perceived discrepancy between the right and the experience of self-determination among such persons, and (b) a redistribution of political power favouring them.

To Mithaug, the crux of 'equality' is 'a fair chance in life for all individuals, including the least advantaged members of society' (p. 3). What is it that constitutes a fair chance in life for all? Mithaug examines three answers currently circulating in the literature on the subject. Not that the three answers chosen by him are exhaustive, but by critiquing them he seeks to formulate his own.

The first answer is taken from the American sociology of social stratification. It equates a fair chance with equal opportunity. Since it presumes equal opportunity to be widespread in the USA, it views the misfortune of the indigent sections as due to their failure to take advantage of the opportunity available to all. Mithaug finds this answer unacceptable because its basic assumptions are untenable, logically and empirically.

The second answer comes from John Rawl's *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1971), which equates equal opportunity

with 'equal share of the collective surplus resulting from cooperation' (p. 20). According to Mithaug, This theory erodes the very basis of self-respect which Rawls claims is the primary good resulting from a just social order. Rawls misses the point that 'prospects for self-determination through cooperation depend on a match between individual interests and group opportunities' (p. 3).

The third answer is chosen from Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), which defines fair chance as unfettered expression of power to self-determine. In essence, this view rules out any programme of social redress for the least advantaged, as such a programme requires 'unjust transfers of resources from those who earned them justly through their own self-determined effort' (p. 3). Mithaug exposes the insensitivity of Nozick's theory to the effects of accumulated advantage and disadvantage on prospects for self-determination.

Mithaug seeks to improve upon these theories by highlighting the causal sequence among three factors which affect the prospects for self-determination, namely, capacity, opportunity, and outcome. The causal interaction among these three factors, he argues, is responsible for cycles of cumulative advantage and disadvantage. Hence his justification for the amelioration of cumulative disadvantages to improve prospects for self-determination for the least advantaged sections of society.

Lest his explanatory thrust is misunderstood, Mithaug clarifies that the goal of the social redress programme suggested by him is 'to equalize prospects for self-determination among all members of society', and not 'to make the beginning or end states of various self-determined pursuits equal' (p. 239). The conflict between the desire for equality and the quest for excellence is viewed by him to be more apparent than real: equal opportunity is a means for self-determination and excellence is an outcome of self-determination.

As a clear and comprehensive review of the idea of self-determination, Mithaug's book will be useful to those interested in social redress strategies and ameliorative programmes. They should, however, be prepared to overlook repetitions of ideas (and even sentences) and wade through jargon and long-winded sentences.

**N. Jayaram**

Department of Sociology  
Bangalore University, Bangalore



D. L. Sheth and Ashis Nandy (eds.). 1996. *The Multiverse of Democracy: Essays in Honour of Rajni Kothari*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. 278. Rs. 345

Critically assessing the mainstream paradigm of democracy and public policy options in the modern state system, the edited volume explores the scope of constructing alternative models of the contemporary political, human and cultural dynamics at the local and regional sphere. It is not a simple departure from the dominant model of democratization of polity, a substantive contribution to the intellectual enrichment of diversities of cultures, systems of knowledge, decision-making structures, and current intercultural and international religions.

The book cogently authenticates that in multicultural systems, the imposition of a monolithic nation state model not only gravitates towards annihilation of the socio-cultural diversities, and thereby community rights, but also creates a fertile ground for avoidable social tensions and crises of governance. This constructive critique is chiefly built upon the present weaknesses of Third World Politics, in terms of the rise of fundamentalism, nationalism and globalization. The challenge, long felt by several serious scholars of the region, demands that a meaningful discourse on the future of classical liberal theory of democracy and human rights be evolved. Rajni Kothari, the scholar-activist, in whose honour these essays are dedicated, may certainly applaud this venture.

The central theme of the volume is the contemporary diversity and internal contradictions of democracy with special reference to India. It persuasively questions the logic of the inevitability of the global, political and economic homogenization, wherein modern states have but a singular choice, that of a particular form of Western liberal democracy, coupled with the triumph of the global market economy, supported by transnational institutions. Such a project of homogenization is bound to create contradictions both at global and local levels. Further, all other forms of political system—including democratic ones—are treated as structurally incongruent with the global economy, and therefore maligned. Similarly, in the name of national integration, states promote the extermination of distinct cultural, linguistic and economic identities, without ever shying away from the naked exercise of coercive power.

Naturally, such a process of homogenization begets counter-violence by the 'traditional' political and cultural entities. Hence, the editors point to the urgency for expansion and indigenization of the discourse on democracy, conceivably through Gandhian ideology and the new social movements. While appreciating the position, a word of caution is required. The projects of post-modernism, relativism, decentralisation, indigenization and autonomy of segmented civil society are welcome, but unless they are directed at human emancipation, they contain the seeds of religious bigotry and anti-socialist ideas which may shift the agenda for human liberation.

Parekh's paper on modern states tends to oppose the violent nature or component of the modern liberal state and favours individualistic epistemology. Though the essay is informative on the progress of the special vision of democracy, the alternative is little developed. But, for him there seems to be no other option to the alien form of democracy. Nonetheless, he concludes that though 'it is too early to write the obituary of the modern state . . . the search for a new form of polity . . . cannot be delayed' (p. 49).

Pointing out the obstacles created by Third and Second World states for the development of social movements, Mazrui outlines the positive and negative nature of political and social movements in the First World. The author calls for imaginative participation of women and power sharing across generations in terms of a new balance of equity within countries, across countries and in the global institutions.

Discussing the heritage of Western bourgeois democracy in the Third World, Amin warns on the limits of such democratic forms. He asserts that a genuine democracy can only be established when we question the mechanism of capitalist reproduction. In this context, he calls for a meaningful dialogue with the emerging new social movements. Amin states that the glorification of Western liberal democracy conceals its inherent destabilizing tendency. The propaganda that accompanies it also attacks socialism and strives to stabilize an alienated society. In terms of cybernetic systems, Galtung impressively locates the outer and inner limits of democracy and envisages an optimistic agenda for peace, development and democracy through active participation of all concerned at different levels.

Interestingly, there are two essays on the Gulf War. Falk exposes the

puzzle of a long established democratic system(s) rushing into a cruel and vengeful war in the Gulf. Military intervention is often directed against civilian societies in the Third and Second World due to their powerlessness and the First World leadership manipulates the event through the control of information technology. This is what Galtung refer to as the outer limits of democracy. There is thus little concern with the death and devastation of the civilian population of Iraq. Falk's view that militarism, violence and war may continue to prevail within the matrix of 'democratic', as long as there is no fundamental challenge to the men and women entrapped in patriarchy requires further substantiation. For human history does not conclusively prove that when women are in power, they avoid violence. Wallerstein also provides a powerful critique of the much applauded victory of the United States of America.

Walker outlines a feasible democratic system that is directed towards the realization of accountability of the state under novel spatio-temporal conditions. Kantian hopes of univesal peace, real world politics and radical scepticism need reformulation. He rightly questions the dichotomization of spatial and temporal modalities of the modernist discourse.

Mies raises a very serious question that despite women's active participation in several social revolutions in history, they are still not treated as equals and there is little solidarity between men and women. Of course, there has been no thorough-going revolution in human history that challenged capitalist and patriachal relations with suitable alternatives. The process of democratization and realization of human rights is not a simple matter of social evolution, rather the opposite. She says '... the whites would not have become free and equal if they had not made the blacks and the browns unfree, the men would not have become free and equal if they had not made the women domesticated, housewifized and dependent' (p. 178). The process of polarization and dialectical contradictions need to be expanded to globalization, affirmative action and many other events. This reviewer joins with her concluding remarks that 'only when exploitation and destruction of nature, exploitation and subordination of women and other peoples is given up as the basis of. . . standard of living', can we hope to achieve equality and freedom for all (p. 182). Dallmayr, more on less like

Parekh, notes the shortcomings of Western liberal democracy and focuses on its liberating potentials and contents. He is also of the view that there is no other option in the immediate context.

We have an interesting imaginary letter from Nehru passed on through Morris-Jones. Fortunately Nehru seems to be keen to acknowledge his guilt and on that basis recommends certain innocent measures for the Indian state and the people. He now regrets that he did not accept Gandhi's suggestion for the liquidation of the Congress as a political party and of its transformation into a voluntary people's organization for social service. Sorry, now it is too late to undo the damage.

There are two papers on political regeneration in India. Pantham pleads for some sort of a post-relativist framework of cognitive and evaluative ideas and values, and the adoption of a critical hermeneutical prospect within the Gandhian moral and political framework of Swaraj and Satyagraha. The principles of truth and non-violence demand transcultural love and care between peoples. Similarly Manor, defining political regeneration as the method of improvement of relations between political institutions and social groups, underlines the enduring capacity for regeneration in India. Yes, 'we need to pay attention to the couterplay between decay. . . and regeneration . . . ' (p. 241).

The last two papers presumably do not quite fit in with the thrust of the volume, except in a very indirect way. However, Madan rightly points out that though anthropology has recorded cultural diversities, it has failed to generate respect for diversities, let alone formulating an established general theory. The prevailing asymmetry of power, imposing the worldview of a modern, secular, technological and statist homogenizing and hegemonic perspective forbids such exercises. The unattended problem is lack of reflection in anthropology on the mainstream notion of democracy.

Similarly, Goldsmith's prescient discourse on the philosophy of science is insightful but has little to do with the specific issue of democracy. He appropriately condemns the implicit artificial ethic of current mainstream science which violates the laws of deduction, just as the long nurtured naturalistic fallacy.

In sum, this is a very stimulating, insightful and provocative volume by exceptionally well-qualified scholars, displaying healthy and

constructive scepticism towards mainstream theories of democracy and nation state. Most of the papers, written in a lucid but challenging style, are marked by a high degree of intellectual perspicacity and directed towards a fair discourse on some of the cardinal issues of our times.

**Jaganath Pathy**

Department of Sociology  
South Gujarat University, Surat

Henry S. R. Kao, Durganand Sinha and Ng Sek-Hong (eds). 1994. *Effective Organizations and Social Values*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. 353. Rs. 325

Globalization of the business environment and the omni-presence of overseas organizations have thrown up a number of issues and challenges for organizational theorists and practitioners. Even if an organization wishes to remain 'domestic', there is increasing pressure on it to inculcate global perspectives and values among its employees. In this scenario a volume like this, dealing with the relationship of organizational functioning and different cultural contexts becomes important. The book contains an Introduction and 3 sections consisting of 19 chapters by scholars from a variety of disciplines, including, sociology, psychology, economics, and business management.

Chapters in the first section discuss the role of Chinese (primarily Confucian) values in shaping management practices in organizations of mainland China, as well as of the 'Confucian league'. The next section contains an account of the cultural characteristics of other societies like India, Thailand and Venezuela and their impact on organizational performance. The final segment is a collection of articles examining the issue of leadership and control in non-Western organizations.

The different papers in this book make the following assertions:

1. There is persistence of the indigenous cultural values in the organizations despite their trans-societal nature.
2. This persistence results in two situations:

- a) The local traditional values blend with the Western ones and help create more productive organizations with more effective leadership.
  - b) The co-existence of 'traditional' and 'modern' values within the same organization leads to a clash between them which, in turn, has an adverse impact on performance.
3. Leadership styles have a major role in the success or failure of organizations, be they authoritarian, democratic or motivational.
  4. Elements other than cultural values also influence organizational working, the most prominent being the political and economic environment and the non-work activities related to family and leisure.

This is a well-written and enjoyable book, a worthy successor to an earlier work by Sinha and Kao, *Social Values and Development: Asian Perspectives*, which came out in 1988. An informative volume, it dispels the myth of the overriding influence of Western management practices over the organizational culture of non-Western societies. The book poses the crucial question of the significance of the indigenous culture for the management practices of the 'modern' organizations in the non-Western countries which are, nevertheless, operating in a West dominated economic environment. Some related questions, however, are left unanswered. The conflicting evidence presented here does not settle the issue regarding the effect of blending modern and traditional values for improving organizational efficiency. There is also no clue as to whether the non-Western cultural forces would win the tug-of-war against the Western value system by emphasizing efficiency.

The spread of Western culture in whatever form is not solely about freedom and emancipation, but for millions of non-Westerners it is about dependency, exploitation and hegemony. None of the authors addresses this issue. Also, all the authors seem to assume that the workers and managers in non-Western organizations have a choice regarding the acceptance or non-acceptance of Western values. But do they really have that choice? There already exists a situation where the actual cultural practices (as opposed to the normative ones) have been affected, transformed, even distorted by the onslaught of the 'alien' values. Moreover, within the same organization, different cultural values may be

followed by different persons which precludes the idea of an organization having homogeneous and harmonious cultural values in the first place. These, however, are minor complaints and in no way detract from the high standard of this book which should stimulate more comparative research in this area.

**Sherry Sabbarwal**

Department of Sociology  
Panjab University, Chandigarh

J. P. S. Uberoi. 1996. *Religion, Civil Society and the State: A Study of Sikhism*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. xi+166. Rs. 325

The blurb states, 'Religion, civil society and the state form the three dimensions of this semiological study of Sikhism'. But the book has a value beyond the application of the structural method as a variety of semiology. It studies the nature of Sikhism, its distinctive symbols and ceremonial customs, its philosophy of religion and evolution of self-identity, its relationship with Hinduism and Islam in theology, history and society—and its connection with Gandhism via martyrdom. The substantive propositions advanced in the book should evoke interest in a much wider readership than the one defined by professional sociology or the still narrower one by semiology.

The argument of the book runs counter, though implicitly, to the dominant trend in recent Sikh studies, reflecting in a mirror image Savarkar's position of identifying 'the strength of any nation or people with the principle of homogeneity or uniformity, the coincidence of its land, race, language, culture, religion, etc., culminating in the state'. The author propounds the pluralist view of unity of humanity through equality of its component segments, differences, relationship of mutuality, complementarity and exchange. He denounces the 1941 slogan of Savarkar, 'Hinduize all politics and militarize Hindudom', and by implication the Khalistani construction of Sikhism and its objectives. The author props up the Indian modernity of a pluralist society, marked by self-rule and self-reform, co-existence, dialogue and exchange of aspects among religions against the mindless, imported, pro-Western modernity of 'one true religion' pitched against another. Sikhism and

Gandhism represented this Indian modernity of combining religion and politics—a 'Kingdom of Heaven' in politics—rejecting state established religion and religion-established state as enemies of civil society and of the rule of religion in society.

Following Dumont, Uberoi presents 'the elementary structure of medievalism' as a common feature of both Hindu and Muslim cultures in India. This common underlying structure becomes the basis of interpreting the emergence of Sikhism which is seen as an attempt for a breakthrough in Indian modernity. The three vertices of the triangle of medievalism were (a) the *sanyasis* or 'men among gods', who possessed religious but asocial virtue and power, leading to *moksha* (individual salvation), (b) the Brahmins, or 'gods among men' with religious and social virtues leading to *dharma/kama*, and (c) the King, with social but irreligious power leading to *artha/kama*. The corresponding vertices in Muslim culture were *tariqat*, *shariat* and *hakumat*. The analysis of Hindu culture as the separation of esoteric/exoteric orientation, individual/collective, status/power or religious/secular are well known to sociologists. The author has analysed the isomorphism in Muslim culture in India, bringing out details of relations between the three pairs with supportive evidence from different scholars of Muslim culture and history. With Dumont, however, the synchronic and diachronic approaches collapse into 'extremely remarkable permanence' of structure. Uberoi tries to look at historical development. 'With what success?' is however an open question. Dumont did not elaborate on the *sanyasi*-king relation as it defies the logic of hierarchy. The *sanyasi* removes himself from society to combine status and power together under spiritual mastery. This emphasis on the separation of the *sanyasi* who has status and power from the society in medievalism prepares the ground for the author to analyse Sikhism as a modernity project by putting an end to the separation emanating from the dualism of Creator and His creation.

Sikhism has been interpreted as a project for salvation of society that should reconcile in the non-dualist Indian modernity the intersecting axes of status vs power, the collective vs the individual and the wordly vs the other-wordly.

Analysing the meaning of the five distinctive symbols (the five K's) of the Sikhs and the initiation ceremony introduced by Guru Gobind



Singh, the author states that Sikhism from its inception had annihilated the categorical partitions between the householder/renouncer and the ruler. The five K's (unshorn hair, comb, iron bangle, sword and tailored loincloth) are presented 'together to affirm the unity of man's estate as being all of a piece'. That Sikhism aimed at total human emancipation and was not merely an ideal of synthesis and reconciliation of Hinduism and Islam may be correct but the derivation from the method applied is not very obvious. The author invents one additional symbol (in its uncircumcised state) to complete the ritual conjunction of the opposites—three pairs of affirmation/constraint.

To understand Sikhism in relation to Hinduism and Islam Uberoi writes that all religions have a universal and perennial aspect and another which is historically constituted. Nanak's pronouncement 'No Hindu, No Muslim' is not to be interpreted as a call for a third or middle way but as an assertion that true Hindus and true Muslims are hard to be found. Nanak's philosophy is of unitarianism and non-dualism underlining 'One tradition and the tradition of One'. The soul of man was a ray of light emanating from God and therefore originally sinless. God, His Word, Name, Guru, Divine Order, Truth, are all One. Continuous repetitions and remembering of His Name, avoidance of egotism (*haumai*) and practice of truthful living (*sachcha achar*) are prescribed. These, in a nutshell, constitute the philosophical base. Guru Arjun added to it through example the concept of martyrdom as central to religion. Guru Gobind Singh, affirming all earlier principles, crystallized Sikhism in the *Adi Granth* as the embodiment of the Guru and transferred charisma to the society for salutation, self-rule, self-sacrifice and self-reform. The affinity of Sikh principles with the universal and perennial aspect of Hinduism and Islam is accepted but its indifference and even conflict with historical aspects is also recognized. Sikhism had no quarrel with Hinduism as *sanatan dharma* but the role of the Brahmin, *varnashram dharma*, and Sanskrit as the revealed language did not find acceptance. Similarly, the spirit of Islam (*din* and *iman*) was welcome, but the way of the Turks, medieval imperial politics, Muslim bigotry, fanaticism and superiority in society were resisted.

The concept of martyrdom as central to Sikhism, Shiism and Gandhism has been discussed in comparative practice. Counterposing martyr to hero leaves a lurking suspicion that esoteric and defeatist

orientation has sneaked in. Or is martyrdom a contingent proposition? If 'meek patient suffering and the rising are perfectly reconciled in the elementary structure of martyrdom' as seemed to be the case in the *gurdwara* reform movement or the national movement, the achievement of the goal of self-rule cannot be conceptually ruled out.

The project of Sikhism, the author argues, is that of a society for salvation, by its very nature and circumstances unitarian in religion, vernacularist in culture and democratic in politics. It is quite comforting to the reviewer—but this is only one of the contending interpretations. A pluralistic conceptualization must recognize the existence of plurality of interpretations, traditions and practices within the Sikh fold. The attempts at enforced homogeneity and uniformity, manipulation of Sikh symbols, structures and institutions by the dominant elite present as much of a threat to the ideal that the author cherishes as the inter-religious enforced uniformity.

Reading the book—made a bit difficult by the specialized methodological rendering—has been a rewarding experience. The reader is exposed to a surfeit of scholarly works in related areas freed from the regime of hackneyed ideas clichés.

**Nirmal Singh**  
Delhi

K. Munirathna Naidu (ed.). 1994. *Peasant Movement in India*. New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House. Pp. 162. Rs. 200

The book under review is an effort by economists to venture into the domain of social historians and sociologists, that is, the study of peasant movements. As an outcome of deliberations in a seminar, the book contains articles covering peasant movements that occurred in various states of India.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part consists of two articles which provide a general and overall picture of peasant movements in India. The remaining twelve articles comprise the second part of the book in which peasant movements in different states have been analysed. It is interesting to note that six articles examine peasants

movements in Bihar. Most of the prominent movements have been mentioned in these articles. To begin with the movements arose to resist the British land policies which led to the pauperisation of tenants. Later, the movements took on a nationalist and anti-imperialist stance. However, after independence the movements were organized for the purpose of securing benefits for the peasants.

Six articles on Bihar take into account different aspects of the history of peasant movements. In her article Sharma focuses on the role of socialists in the peasant movements in Bihar. Swami Sahajanand's contribution in this regard has been noted by her. All articles give a great importance to the rich history of peasant struggles of Bihar. At the same time, class conflicts and peasant consciousness are considered significant for the emergence of these movements. Predictably, the Santhal rebellion is also the subject of two articles.

In addition to the articles on Bihar, we have other contributions that cover some other states. Patel and Talati have focused on the contribution of Patel and Gandhi in Kheda and Bardoli *satyagrahas*. Bhatti and Dahiya have noticed a new social movement in Himachal Pradesh, that is, the farmers' movement. However, they have not made an analytical distinction between the peasant and the farmer. For them they are same. Thakur and Thakur have thrown light on the role of Charan Singh in the peasant movement as the leader of rich and middle peasantry. However, they have regarded the *patwaris*, the lowest level revenue officials, as oppressors whose agitation was suppressed by Charan Singh. West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have also been covered by the contributors.

Last but not least the publisher has further contributed to the increase in the agony of the reader. From the beginning to the end there are numerous printing errors on almost every page. The book does not possess subject and author indexes and pages from 103-118 are missing. It seems that this gap is filled by an incomplete article from some other book on the mode of production in Indian agriculture. In sum, the book is an ideal instance of bad editing and publication.

**Paramjit S. Judge**

Department of Sociology  
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

Mark Juergensmeyer. 1994. *Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. 292+xiv. Rs. 300

This book makes a refreshing attempt to understand various forms of religious nationalism and analyse the causes of their resurgence. Its main thesis is that '... religious nationalists are not just fanatics. For the most part, (they are) political activists (who are) seriously attempting to reformulate the modern language of politics and provide a new basis for the nation-state. In many cases they are waging what they regard as neo-colonialist struggles against Western culture and its political ideology, and they aim at infusing public life with indigenous cultural symbols and moral values'. (p. XIII).

The book is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on the growing loss of faith in secular nationalism and the consequent rise of religious nationalism as a competing ideology. It brings out in bold relief the view entertained by religious nationalists who consider Western secular nationalism as a mask for a certain form of a European Christian culture. The religious rebels in Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East perceive in secular nationalism a colonial design to dissipate the power of Islam. They view secular nationalism as bereft of moral values and hence as the source of amorality and decadence that afflicts the world today. Similar views are expressed by the proponents of Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh variants of nationalism in South Asia. They are convinced that to save humanity from the moral degeneration that is sweeping the world, it is necessary to construct nationalist agendas drawing heavily from the fount of religion.

The second part of the book provides case studies of religious nationalist movements in different parts of the world. It provides a vivid account of the Islamic revolution in Iran and of Egypt's incipient religious revolt. The revolt in Egypt is projected as being different from the Iranian revolution because it did not have any theological or organizational link to politics and was much less centralized. The author is of the view that while extremist activities such as the explosion set off in the World Trade Centre in New York may prove dramatic and have high propaganda value, it is the strategy of moderate factions such as the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt which provides a more viable

mode of Islamic revolution. He holds the same to be true for the Israeli case and for the Muslim wing of the Palestinian liberation movement.

Moving to South Asia, the book focuses on the rise of militant Hindu Nationalism of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), of Sikh nationalism of Bhindranwale, and the Sinhalese nationalist movement. The author describes the BJP's movement as the largest movement of religious nationalism in the world, both in terms of sheer numbers and in terms of the intensity of violence that it unleashed. The BJP which won only two of the 545 seats in the lower house of Parliament in 1984 increased its tally to 120 seats in the 1991 elections. Thereafter it played a crucial role in stirring the temple-mosque controversy in Ayodhya which culminated in the demolition of the mosque on December 6, 1992. The real significance of the BJP lies in its articulation of *hindutva* ideology as the basis of Indian nationalism.

In reaction partly to Hindu nationalism and partly to secular nationalism, Sikh nationalism gained stridency under the leadership of Sant Bhindranwale. Bhindranwale projected his movement as a great war between good and evil and as a struggle for the Sikh faith, the Sikh nation and the Sikh identity. It resulted in the killing of numerous civilians and police high-handedness *vis-a-vis* innocent civilians.

The Sinhalese and Tamil nationalist movements too have resulted in the escalation of mindless violence and police brutality. Religious nationalism has also emerged victorious against socialism in the formerly Communist countries. Despite ruthless suppression during the Soviet regime, religion provided the ideological base and inspiration for several nationalist movements that surfaced after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Islamic nationalism has gained strength in the Central Asian part of the former Soviet Union. In these regions, the Islamic nationalist movements harnessed the peoples' resentment against what they perceived as 'Russian colonialism'. It should be noted, however, that each of the movements discussed in this book has had its distinct features and its own trajectory of growth. Yet, all of them articulated some form of religious nationalism. It is important in this context to observe that with a few exceptions, such as that of Algeria, Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan, these movements have been controlled and directed by the laity. Hence, they should not be viewed as strictly religious

movements. The same may be said for the upsurge of religious nationalism in the nations of Eastern Europe.

The third part of the book addresses issues related to religious nationalism such as its proclivity to violence and its apparent disregard for democracy and human rights, particularly the rights of the minorities. While observing that radical movements for religious nationalism have generally been accompanied by violence, the author finds Girad's explanation of it in terms of 'mimetic desire'—the desire to imitate a rival—unconvincing. He considers it more, as he maintains that the violence involved in religious nationalist movements can be compared with violence involved in religious warfare which involves sacrificing the lives of members of the enemy's camp and martyrdom of fellow members of the religion. He advances the imagery of cosmic struggle, the great cosmic encounter between good and evil and between divine truth and falsehood. He notices that the rhetoric of cosmic struggle is pervasive in the vocabulary of virtually all the religious revolutionaries that he studied. He holds that all religions sanction violence for a 'holy war' or a 'just war'. In using violence against cosmic forces, the evil forces, the lives of individuals targeted for attack are not considered important. The revolutions that these movements strive for also impose patriarchal codes on women because men are regarded as the principal agents of the revolution.

This book also provides an evaluation of the seeming incompatibility between religious nationalism and democracy, minority rights and rights of the individual. On the face of it, theocracy and democracy appear to be antithetical to each other; in theocracy, it is not the will of the people that matters but the will of God. In actual fact, however, many of the revolutionaries interviewed by the author enthusiastically affirm their faith in democracy and claim that the religion they espouse is truly democratic. Similarly, the issue of minority rights, according to the author, is not peculiar to religious nationalists; it is a fundamental problem in secular countries. Two solutions are forwarded for this: one is to provide a separate status for minority communities and the other is to integrate or accommodate them within the dominant religious ideology. Religious nationalists by and large favour the second solution as it provides a more flexible range of options—from common civil code to two-level *sharia*. The problem of reconciling human or individual

rights is more intractable in religious nationalism as the latter is premised upon the communitarian, if not always communal, ideology. Little wonder that religious nationalists describe the relationship between the individual and society as one of moral responsibility rather than of rights. However, in their nationalist agenda they proclaim their commitment to values of personal security and dignity, though they describe them as religious values rather than as secular ideals.

In the concluding chapter, the author poses the question: can we live with religious nationalism? Accepting the fact that religious nationalism, in one form or another, is here to stay, he sorts out those aspects of religious nationalism which 'we should continue adamantly to oppose' such as its potential for demagoguery and dictatorship, the tendency to satanize the United States and loathe the Western civilization and the violence and intolerance it breeds. The author also admires certain positive features of religious nationalism such as its appreciation of tradition and historical roots, and its insistence on grounding public institutions in morality. Overall, he observes that religious nationalists are 'doing far more than resuscitating archaic ideas of religion'. According to him they are creating a synthesis between religion and the secular state, a merger of the cultural identity and legitimacy of old religiously sanctioned monarchies with the democratic spirit. He recognizes that while such a combination may prove to be incendiary, yet it may also be necessary, for without the legitimacy conferred by religion, the democratic process does not seem to work in some parts of the world (p. 202).

The author deserves to be complimented for weaving together informative accounts of recent eruptions of religious nationalism in several parts of the world, for articulating the perspective of religious nationalists and, above all, for his skillful handling of a sensitive theme. I feel uneasy, however, in regard to some aspects of the book. While the book covers a wide range of movements it misses out some very important cases of religious nationalism such as the movement for Pakistan during India's freedom struggle and the recent Shiv Sena movement in Maharashtra. Some of the accounts of movements are sketchy, though trendy. Take, for example, the discussion of Sikh nationalism. Was it a case of religious nationalism, or ethnic nationalism or of casteism? The author himself provides some material to suggest

that it had a significant caste dimension. Yet he forcibly fits this movement in the category of religious nationalist movements. The book hardly offers any fresh insights or information for those conversant with the history of some of these movements. The author shies away from confronting the critical issue pertaining to the place of religion in public life. While secularism cannot deny a place for religion in public affairs, rational-secular considerations play a critical role in the affairs of theocratic states.

The author's explanation of the violence involved in religious movements is not satisfactory. I think the causes have to be located in the 'collective unconscious' of religious communities and in the political dialectics generated by such movements.

Notwithstanding such disputable positions, the book has been faithful in projecting the perspective of the protagonists of religious nationalism. It should be an essential reading for social scientists, civic leaders and most importantly, for the secularists amongst us.

**S. L. Sharma**

Department of Sociology, Panjab University  
Chandigarh

M. Atchi Reddy. 1996. *Lands and Tenants in South India: A Study of Nellore District 1850-1990*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. 215. Rs. 345

This book is a history of land lease market over a period of 140 years. This district has undergone certain administrative changes which have been taken care of at the methodological level. The author has confined himself to the analysis of lease agreements and certain other written records.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part provides the general background covering objectives of the study, the agrarian background of Nellore district, the process of data collection, and the nature and content of lease agreements. In this part we do not find any discussion or theoretical perspective on tenancy, but the objectives of the research are clearly stated. These are analysis of the trends in the rates of rent, identification of socio-economic status of both lessors and lessees and



tracing the changes in the nature and forms of tenancy. However, the most important chapter in this part of the book is the one on the process of data collection which exemplifies thoroughness in the collection of lease documents and other items of evidence. The author has based his analysis on 4,164 lease documents that he unearthed.

To begin with, we find three kinds of lease agreements, for example, oral, mortgaged and perpetual. Oral lease agreements were the most common covering a great variety of relationships including crop-sharing and fixed rent. As we scan the nature of agreements across time, we find that there was an increase in oral agreements indicating the rise of concealed tenancy under the impact of land reforms after 1950.

The second part of the book provides an analysis of the lease agreements. The character of the lease agreements was not formal in the sense that the relationship between the lessor and the lessee was confined to rent payment. In fact, we find that there was main rent as well as miscellaneous rent. The latter included diverse items ranging from grass to services. The medium of rent was in kind and was calculated by using a variety of paddy. Over a period of time there was a decline in the miscellaneous rent. The rate of rent depended upon the nature of soil, level of irrigation, and sources of irrigation, as is found anywhere in the country, but there had been a continuous increase in the rent.

In the process of interaction between the tenant and the landlord, there were various aspects that involved decision making as well as disputes. According to the author, the majority of the landlords were socially or economically superior to their tenants (p. 110). This implied that even after leasing out his land the landlord was the principal decision-maker. However, crop-failures owing to various factors always involved a risk for the tenant. The lease agreement tended to make provisions to avoid risks that were not due to the decisions of tenants. However, a large number of reasons, such as tenant's initiative, delay in rent payment, joint landownership, and so on, led to disputes that moved to the courts. In addition, there were a large number of cases where landlords mortgaged their land to the tenant. The author concludes that over a long period landownership shifted from landlords to tenants.

However, what makes the book sociologically significant is the chapter on caste, gender and occupation although it lacks a sociological

perspective. For example, we come to know that among various castes, Brahmins and Reddys were numerous among the lessors. We find that there were 45 lessors but 304 lessees among the Harijans. Despite this the author holds the view that there was caste affinity between the lessors and the lessees. Interestingly, the largest number of tenants belonged to the Reddy caste. The gender dimension provides a new perspective to agrarian dynamics. In the case of women lessors, the rent was low and there was no improvement on the lands. The tenants sometimes would not give rent to the women lessors. It is interesting that more than half of the lessors who owned 53.31 per cent of the total leased-out land in the sample reported their occupation as 'renting of land'. One can predict changes in the caste and occupation as a result of land reforms. This class of lessors has disappeared now. The Reddys are the major landowning caste.

The book is a model of quantitative research in agrarian relations. The author has avoided making generalizations wherever he felt that evidence was not sufficient. The work, however, suffers from certain shortcomings. First, the author has not been able to identify distinct phases in the tenancy relations. One can identify certain phases in his discussion. For instance, there was a change in the character of tenancy after 1950. As a result, the author has failed to record changes clearly. Second, it should be understood that tenancy is a social relation in which the interaction may not be harmonious. Disputes are basically struggles. However, treating tenancy as an economic process leads to a fragile construction of an essentially social category. Finally, the author should have taken the assistance of some sociologist to construct, at least conjecturally, a hierarchy of castes which common sense would demand.

**Parmajit S. Judge**

Department of Sociology  
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

Vinod Pavarala. 1996. *Interpreting Corruption: Elite Perspectives in India*. Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. 260. Rs. 325

This book deals with corruption from the social constructionist perspective. Here attention is paid to how strategic elites in society

define the problem and negotiate its solutions too. As the author writes in the Introduction, 'Groups with conflicting interests and stakes in the system have varied perspectives on the nature of the problem and compete with one another to impose their particular constructions and influence the public discourse on the subject.'

This study was conducted in Andhra Pradesh. Data were collected from 60 selected members of five groups of elites, that is, politicians (11), bureaucrats (15), industrialists (10), judges (12) and journalists (12). These five groups of elites were selected with the assumption that corruption usually originates from such elites as they assume the greater responsibility for political, economic and social development of the nation. Secondly, it had also been observed in the past that ruling elites were involved in corruption for seeking illicit benefits through official channels.

A purposive sampling was used in the selection of the respondents. About 60 per cent of the respondents were selected by the snowballing technique by asking the respondents to suggest names of other possible respondents. Interview guide were used and the interviews were audio taped. Secondary data was collected from the manifestoes of political parties for the General Elections of 1989 and 1991. Content analysis of the reports and opinion articles of four leading newspapers was done—one Telugu and three English—for the period from November 1990 to June 1991. Apart from this, one short session of two weeks of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly was observed. For the purpose of policy evaluation a case study was conducted of a quasi-judicial corruption agency, like the Anti Corruption Bureau and the A. P. Lok Ayukta. This study is totally based on qualitative analysis of the data which is very strong.

The bureaucrats, industrialists and politicians seem fully satisfied with the narrow-legal definition of corruption. It appears that they do not want to go beyond that to the broad-moralistic definition as they are in a position to mobilize resources and have greater legitimacy and dominance in public discourse. Judges and journalists offer a second of 'broad-moralistic' definition. Regarding the causes of corruption, there is a complex interplay among the interests and objectives of elites that gives rise to particular constructions of corruption. They blame others rather than themselves for the fact that corruption has become endemic

in society. Politicization of the civil service bureaucracy, expensive electoral system and low quality of political leadership are the important political factors identified as responsible for corruption. State intervention in private economic activities is identified as the main important economic factor. Social acceptance of corruption and the tendency to conspicuous consumerism are considered as the main social factors.

Regarding the consequences of corruption, arguments are neither uniformly rejected nor accepted. These elites seek either to get public support in elections or view themselves as acting in the best interests of society by highlighting the dysfunctionalities of corruption. For example, for the out-of-power elites, corruption has horrible consequences. They consider the legal measures to check corruption through the Anti Corruption Bureau and the A. P. Lok Ayukta as only of symbolic value to merely exploit the gullible people. There is also no consensus among these five groups of elites on solutions to the problem of corruption. Each seems to blame the others rather than itself. The study reaches a conclusion that the problem of corruption has a constructed and negotiated character in A. P. which may also be true for India as a whole. From the standpoint of sociology of knowledge, this study helps in clarifying the role played by elites in developing countries in defining the problem of corruption.

This book is the first of its kind in India. Though it is a state level study which analyses the problem in the context of the state's political, social and economic history, it helps in understanding the problem of corruption in India in general from the perspective of the elites, and can provide a base for the study of the phenomenon at the national level.

**Naresh Singh**

Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India,  
Ahmedabad

# PROFESSION

## Secretary's Report

I have the privilege to present the third consecutive report on the activities of the Indian Sociological Society for the period January-November 1996. During this period we worked to achieve two ends: (i) to consolidate the two major activities of the Society, that is, the organizing of the All India Sociological Conference, and maintaining and enhancing the periodicity and quality of its journal; and (ii) to diversify the activities of the Society.

A meeting of the Managing Committee was held on June 29, 1996 to work out the modalities of the 23rd All India Sociological Conference. The committee accepted with pleasure the invitation of Professor D. N. Dhangare, Vice-Chancellor, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, to host the conference at Kolhapur during November 23-25, 1996. In the light of the suggestions made at the General Body Meeting held at Bhopal as also the overriding concern for eco-development, the committee chose the general theme of the conference as 'Ecology, Society and Culture'. The following specific panels were constituted:

1. Ecology and Development
2. Voluntary Organizations and Social Change
3. Globalizations and Folk Culture
4. Values and Social Transformation
5. Open Panel

The Committee decided to organize symposia on the following themes during the conference:

- a) Religion and Politics
- b) Crisis in Education

To invite a distinguished speaker to deliver the special lecture at the conference, the committee constituted a panel consisting of the following names:

- i. Professor Rajni Kothari
- ii. Professor M. S. Gore
- iii. Professor B. K. Roy Burman

Professor Kothari regretted his inability to accept the invitation due to ill health. Professor M. S. Gore was kind enough to accept our invitation.

The announcement regarding the conference was made in Volume 45, No. 1 of the *Sociological Bulletin*. Brochures carrying the relevant information on the conference were also distributed to the members of the Society and other concerned institutions.

To assist the local organizing committee, the Secretary, along with Dr. George Mathew, visited Kolhapur in September 1996 and met the Vice-Chancellor Professor D. N. Dhanagare, the organizing secretary Professor S. N. Pawar and their team of local organizers. Special care was taken to ensure that papers were properly allocated to the appropriate panels and to providing the necessary infrastructural support.

Looking in retrospect at the excellent arrangements made by the local organizers we are pleased with our choice of the venue. We place on record our deepest appreciation for the keen interest that Professor Dhanagare took in making the conference a notable academic event. Professor Pawar and his team deserve our profound appreciation for their commendable organizational inputs in the smooth conduct of the conference.

It is heartening to note that the September 1996 number of the *Sociological Bulletin* has already been released and the March 1997 number is getting ready. I am sure that the honourable members have noticed steady improvement in the quality of its production and contents.

I regret to inform you that Professor Aileen D. Ross, a Life Member of the Society, passed away in October 1996. Subsequently, her attorney wrote to us to say she had in her will bequeathed a sum of 10, 000 Canadian dollars to the *Sociological Bulletin*. As a token of its appreciation, the Managing Committee in its meeting held on June 29, 1996 resolved that:

1. The next number of the *Sociological Bulletin* will be brought out in memory of late Professor A. D. Ross, a friend of the Society. It should also carry a write-up on Professor A. D. Ross by Professor Yogendra Singh.
2. An essay contest on 'The Family', a theme dear to Professor A. D. Ross, be organized by the Society once in every two years with an award of Rs.1,000 to the best essay which should also be published in the *Sociological Bulletin*. A sub-committee has been constituted by the Managing Committee to work out modalities of the essay contest for consideration and approval of the Managing Committee at its next meeting.

To streamline the book review section of the *Sociological Bulletin* it has been decided to prepare an exhaustive panel of book reviewers. For this purpose a proforma seeking necessary information about the areas of interest of the life members will be included in the next number of the *Bulletin*.

The Managing Committee at its meeting held at Kolhapur regretted the episode leading to the resignation of the Managing Editor. In the interest of the Society and the *Bulletin*, the Managing Committee resolved to request the Managing Editor to continue for another year, that is, 1997.

Steps have been taken during this period to diversify the activities of the Society. I am particularly delighted to inform the honourable members that we have made notable progress in the formation of Research Committees. A note about it has been prepared by Professor P. N. Pimpley and circulated among the members of the Managing Committee for their comments and suggestions. This will be placed before the Managing Committee at its next meeting for its consideration and approval. It will be our endeavour to give effect to the idea of Research Committees by the time we meet for the 24th Conference of the Society.

It is a measure of the growing popularity of the Society that we have received invitations from Osmania University, Hyderabad, and Saurashtra University, Rajkot, to host the 24th Conference. The Managing Committee is pleased to accept the invitation of the Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University, Hyderabad, and puts on record its

deep appreciation of the invitation from the Vice-Chancellor, Saurashtra University, Rajkot. The 24th All India Sociological Conference will be held at Osmania University, Hyderabad, towards the end of December 1997.

Further evidence of the vigorous health of the Society is the steady increase in its membership. Young professional colleagues from all over the country and abroad are joining the Society as life members. During the period covered in this report we have admitted 60 new members. Overall, we have 1,850 life members, though our effective membership is 1,400.

For a crucial part of this period, our Treasurer, Professor Mohini Anjum, was on leave. During her absence, Dr George Mathew was kind enough to accede to the request of the Managing Committee to look after the financial matters of the Society. As before, he did a good job of it for which we place on record our gratitude. The Society is also indebted to him and his colleagues at the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, particularly Mr P. K. K. Namboodiri, Mr Madhu Nair and Ms Rekha Gupta for their valuable role in taking care of the work of the Society. At the end, I would like to thank our President and honourable members of the Managing Committee for their guidance and support.

**S. L. Sharma**

Secretary



### Discussion: Varna and Jati—Some New Thoughts

This is to participate in a brief way in the debate raised by Andre Beteille in the March 1996 number of this journal ('*Varna and Jati*', pp. 15-27.) on the issue of changes in the character of caste system in India. The *varna* attributes are acquired by a person and group as class appellation. People are not born with *varna* characteristics and traits. To that extent it is a kind of cultural phenomenon having values, attitude and behaviour derived variously from one's vocation, calling, trade, faith, religion, and so on. *Jati* traits on the other hand are inherited as they connote racial and sub-racial ethnic attributes related to descent and parentage.

An individual and a group can both fall within *varna* and *jati* appellations. It seems that the term 'caste' was employed to denote *varna* to begin with and its reference was carried over to *jati* as well. With the advancement of reason and rationality, *varna* and *jati* appellations were employed differentially to denote *varna* with ritual connotations of class and *jati* with secular connotations of ethnicity. As Beteille has said, the use of *varna* to denote caste was relegated to the background and that of *jati* became current in a general way (Ibid.).

The biological phenomena of cross-breeding of populations has given rise to a number of races (*jatis*) and sub-races, according to anthropological analysis and interpretation. As a corollary, one can say that *jatis* of yore gave rise to a number of sub-*jatis* with mixture of various traits. *Varna*, meaning colour in Sanskrit, has been discussed by K. N. Sharma in one of the earlier issues of *Sociological Bulletin*. It is a metaphor to indicate occupational rank. It is true that *varna* has of late been replaced by the more extensive emphasis on *jati*. But *jati* having subordinated *varna* in the representation of social groups in the caste system uniformly and point by point in all regions and sub-regions in India is something that cannot be asserted. This is because the migration patterns of groups with perceptions of homogeneity and heterogeneity of inheritance and descent were not the same. The field-view of caste per se varied from place to place and so did-unorthodox influences in the flexible use of the two terms.

Discussing the various dimensions of cultural traits, N. K. Bose (*Cultural Anthropology* Delhi: Mittal Publishers, 1988: 48) has remarked, 'The Bengalis are divided into castes as in other provinces (administrative units in British Raj) of India; but observing more closely, we find that the relation between different castes is not the same in other provinces.'

During my childhood days and the later field-view experiences in Saurashtra, I found that these terms *varna* and *jati* (corrupt *varan* and *jat*) were used loosely. *Jati* in particular was used to refer to the Negro (Sidi), the Muslim (Musalman) and to the wandering tribes (Adodia). The *varna* appellation was not used for them. However, *jati* was freely used to refer to the artisan classes, the *luhar* (blacksmith), *darji* (tailor), *suthar* (carpenter), who may be Hindus or non-Hindus. *Jati* was not confined to denote castes falling within the *varna* categories alone. In brief, both *varna* and *jati* were used to represent many human groups identified as castes. During the restudy of the Mers of Saurashtra (Harshad R. Trivedi, *The Mers of Saurashtra Revisited and Studied in the Light of Socio-cultural Change and Cross-cousin Marriage*. New Delhi: Concept, 1989: 71) seven non-Sanskritic *varnas*, that is, the Mahajan, Khedut, Katio among others, based on achievement criteria, were brought to my notice. Among these, the composite *varna* of Ter-tansali (13-bell metal bowls) was also included. The list of thirteen castes did not match exactly in different sub-regions of Saurashtra, and in other parts of Gujarat the concept was not at all in vogue. There were overlapping categories of ethnic groups in different sub-regions in the *varna* of Ter-tansali. This field view of the caste system was hardly referred to by the intelligentsia in the recent past.

It seems reasonable to think that the book-view and field-view of the caste system in India can be separately identified as the classical view and the gestalt-view of the caste system. Within these varied views of the caste system, one can further identify micro, meso and macro levels of caste systems in terms of relativistic positions. This can be illustrated from Beteille's (p. 23) analysis of the caste system. For instance, the perception of the author's own caste, Bengali or Christian, by the people in Burdwan, provided the micro-view of the caste system. This meant that without fixation of caste appellation, no one can be accepted as an integral part of the caste system in Indian society. On the other hand, the

meso view of the caste system can be discussed in the names based on sectarian, religious, tribal and similar other appellations (p. 25) such as the Kayastha, Sadgope, Santhal, Bagadi, and so on, specially in the realm of political leverage of the people. Thirdly, the macro-view of the caste system emerges when social groups such as Bengali, Oria, Gujarati, Marathi and so on are identified as *jati*. The trans-national identities of French, English, Japanese, American, German and the like as *jati*, are also illustrations providing macro-views of the caste system. The configurations of caste hierarchy of people living in urban and rural areas may further provide other dimensions of caste views within different strata of society in India.

Considering local field-views of the caste system in India, a variety of combinations of caste systems can be identified along upper and lower levels of social stratification with or without hypergamous relationships. As Srinivas says, 'It is not only that the hierarchy is nebulous here and there, and the castes are mobile over a period of time, but the hierarchy is also to some extent local. The *varna* scheme offers a perfect contrast to this picture' (M. N. Srinivas. *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*. Bombay: Asia, 1962). It seems that any analysis of the caste system would suffer largely due to the gross neglect of the micro, meso and macro dimensions, and its ambiguities and cross-cutting attributes and traits. The collective caste solidarities illustrated in the non-Sanskritic *varna* model in Saurashtra are manifestations of assertions of sub-cultural identities of ethnic groups in search of homogeneity. These new thoughts may be helpful in rationalising the differences in the perception of the caste system in India. The final judgement on the true positions/profile of the caste system is the field-view and not the book view as rightly suggested by Srinivas and agreed upon by Beteille.

**Harshad R Trivedi**

Institute of Cultural and Urban Anthropology  
Ahmedabad

## Obituary

### Aileen D. Ross

Professor Aileen D. Ross who was a Professor Emeritus at McGill University, Canada, passed away in October 1996 at the age of ninety-three. She was deeply involved in the study of Indian society. Her book, *Hindu Family in an Urban Setting*, became a prescribed reading in the Sociology courses taught in several universities in India. The book was a product of several years of devoted research in India.

Aileen Dansken Ross was born on June 3, 1902 in a Montreal family that encouraged education at a time when education for women was not generally considered important. After earning a B.Sc. at the London School of Economics (1939) she joined the University of Chicago where she completed her M.A. in 1941 and Ph.D. in 1950. In 1946 she joined the faculty of the Department of Sociology, McGill University, where she taught with distinction for more than two decades. Besides *Hindu Family in an Urban Setting*, she wrote *The Lost and the Lonely*, which was a study of prostitution and battered women, *Student Unrest*, which describes the turbulent 60s, and *Some Social Implications of Multilingualism*, which was a study in the sociology of language.

Professor Ross was not only a talented scholar, but was also known for her devotion and deep concern for social problems. She initiated and stimulated discussions on important policy issues in regard to poverty, on the status of women and on youth. She was a founder member of the Canadian Human Rights Foundation and was actively involved in influencing international policies on human rights.

Professor Ross was a self-effacing and large-hearted philanthropist supporting several public causes that were dear to her heart. She willed a major portion of her estate, which was valued at about US \$ 175,000, to be used for research on poverty. She made an anonymous gift of \$ 50,000 to the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of

Canada in 1985 to support two post-doctoral fellowships to be awarded for research work on urban poverty in Canada.

Professor Ross had made numerous friends in India and was keen to contribute to the development of Sociology in India. She was a Life Member of the Indian Sociological Society and took a keen interest in the publication of *Sociological Bulletin* and willed a sum of \$ 10,000 to support the effort. The Managing Committee of the Indian Sociological Society has decided to institute an all india essay competition for young sociologists in her memory as a token of appreciation of her generosity and her friendship for the Society.

**Mohini Anjum**

Department of Sociology  
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

### New Life Members of the Society

Membership No.	Name and Place
LMI 1679	R. B. Patil, Zurai-Nagar
1680	Rashmi Singh, New Delhi
1681	Saswati Biswas, Darjeeling
1682	P. S. Mondal, New Delhi
1683	Rekha Chaubey, Kanpur
1684	Mohan Jharta, Shimla
1685	Ramesh C. Nayak, New Delhi
1686	Kamala Ganesh, Bombay
1687	Maitreya Ghatak, Calcutta
1688	Manju Singh, Jaipur
1689	Pradeep Gouraha, Jagdalpur
1690	S. G. Hadimani, Gulbarga
1691	P. D. Kulkarni, Gulbarga
1692	Prem Verma, Nagpur
1693	B. M. Morabad, Dharwad
1694	M. R. Patil, Solapur
1695	L. J. Badshah, Ahmedabad
1696	Veena R. Sankangoudar, Dharwad
1697	Premalatha B. Hiremath, Gadag
1698	Avinash Kumar Pundir, Meerut
1699	M. G. Sanap, Pune
1700	M. D. Koli, Kolhapur
1701	A. R. Katti, Belgaum
1702	T. Rajendran, Dindigul
1703	P. B. Kamble, Kolhapur
1704	M. N. Nagendra Prakash, Manipal
1705	R. B. Jadhav, Kolhapur

## Style-Sheet for Reviewers

The *Sociological Bulletin* has, over the years, built up a reputation as an authoritative and lively journal and through your help and cooperation this reputation can be enhanced. Here are a few tips on how to approach a book that you are reviewing for the journal. A good review should whet the reader's appetite or warn her/him against a poorly conceived or executed book. The review itself should be engaging and should bring out both the substance and the value of the book besides providing a judgement on its success in achieving its aims. The following questions will be useful in writing the review:

- \* Does the book have a clear and significant thesis and methodology?
- \* What is its originality?
- \* What is the quality of the author's research and sources?
- \* Is the book well written and clearly organized?
- \* Is the appeal of the book narrow or broad?
- \* Where does it fit in its field? In sociology generally?

Avoid a simple listing of the papers and contributors of a symposium or a collection. Feel free to devote most of your space to the particular papers or ideas you find most stimulating. Avoid introducing the author of the book.

Let the merits of a good book be evident from your elaboration of its contents. Restrain yourself from providing an introduction by writing about the author or about the general class of books to which the title under review belongs. A purposive and concise review which concentrates on the contents of the book and shows liveliness and wit will be appreciated by the readers. Instead of using adjectives and enthusiastic expressions, try to persuade the reader of the book's worth by your reasoning. If the book is part of a series and you wish to call attention to the merits of that series, please do so. If you want to disagree with the author, explain her/his position sufficiently so that the reader can follow the argument. Avoid making much over small defects; such criticisms may create a misleading impression of the book. *Your judgements, positive as well as negative, should be on the contents of the book and not on the personality or character of its author.*

In your review, think of the book as a whole—of its principle themes or topics, its most interesting lines of argument. *Do not write an abstract or a chapter by chapter outline.*

*It is against the policy of the journal to publish unsolicited reviews.* If you are interested in reviewing books for *Sociological Bulletin*, please write directly to the Managing Editor, specifying your field of interest and your specialization.

### General Instructions

1. Please keep within the length allotted. Send us *two* copies of your review—with *double line space*—and keep one with you. Do not send a copy of your review to the author or editor of the work in question.
2. If you cannot submit your review on time, if you have reviewed the book already or are committed to review it elsewhere, please let us know at the earliest so that we can arrange an extension or find another reviewer. If you decide either that the book you have agreed to review does not merit a review in *Sociological Bulletin* or that you are, for any reason, an inappropriate reviewer, please let us know immediately.
3. Since we want balanced judgments we expect you to decline to review a work when a sense of overriding personal affection, obligation, competition or enmity exists with the author.
4. Do not use a reference list, footnotes, or long quotations. Your references to other works should be incorporated in the text.
5. For reviews of more than one book, list the books in alphabetical order by author.
6. **Once having agreed to review a book, please make sure that you send the review within the stipulated time. Publishers and authors of books will be anxiously awaiting your expert judgement.**
7. Please set-up your heading as shown in the format below, always double-line spaced, with wide margins on both sides of the sheet. If possible, do provide us with a word count of your review. The format shows you the order in which you should set your review article and the information that you must provide on the book along with the review.

### Format of the Book Review

---

#### Word count

Example of heading: Veena Das. 1995. *Critical Events. An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* Delhi Oxford University Press. Pp. 230 Rs. 325

#### Text of Review

Name of Reviewer:

Designation:

Address:

---



### Database of Prospective Reviewers

*To build a database of prospective reviewers to review books received by the journal, the Managing Committee of the Indian Sociological Society requests interested scholars to fill in the following proforma and send it to the Secretary, Indian Sociological Society, Institute of Social Sciences, B-7/18 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110 029 at the earliest.*

1. Name :
2. Life Membership No.
3. Academic Qualifications :
4. Designation and Official Address :
5. Residential Address :
6. Areas of Interest :
7. Teaching Experience : ----- Years
8. Research Experience : ----- Years
9. Details of Publications : [attach a separate sheet]  
(including books, papers and reviews)
10. Time you require for sending the reviews
11. Names and Addresses of Two Referees :

Date:

Signature

## INDEX OF VOLUME 45 (1996)

### PAPERS

Author/Title	Number	Pages
BETEILLE, ANDRE Varna and Jati	(1)	15-27
OOMMEN, T. K. Reconciling Equality and Pluralism: A New Agenda for the 'Developed' Societies	(2)	143-160
RAO, N. SUDHAKAR Ideology, Power and Resistance in a South Indian Village	(2)	205-232
SABERWAL, SATISH On Reality: Its Perception and Construction	(2)	161-188
SINGH, SUPRIYA The Cultural Distinctiveness of Money	(1)	55-85
SINGH, YOGENDRA Sociology and the Emerging Challenge of Change	(1)	1-13
WEBSTER, JOHN C. B. Understanding the Modern Dalit Movement	(2)	189-204
WHITEHEAD, JUDITH Bodies of Evidence, Bodies of Rule: The Ilbert Bill, Revivalism, and Age of Consent in Colonial India	(1)	29-54

### RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

BALAKRISHNAN, RAJIV State Sponsored Health Care in Rural Uttar Pradesh: Facets of Grassroots Encounters of a Survey Researcher	(1)	87-95
---	-----	-------

### SYMPOSIUM

NADARAJAH, M. Notes on Teaching Sociology	(2)	233-253
--	-----	---------

## BOOK REVIEWS

Reviewer/Author/Title	Number	Pages
BALAKRISHNAN, RAJIV Tulsi Patel. <i>Fertility Behaviour: Population and Society in a Rajasthan Village</i>	(1)	122-124
CHAUDHURI, MAITRAYEE A. M. Shah, B. S. Baviskar and E. A. Ramaswamy (eds). <i>Social Structure and Change: Women in Indian Society</i>	(2)	261-262
CHAUHAN, ABHA Loes Schenk-Sandbergen. <i>Women and Seasonal Labour Migration</i>	(1)	109-111
CHOPRA, SARVJIT K. Pravin Visaria, Leela Visaria and Anurudh Jain. <i>Contraceptive Use and Fertility in India. A case study of Gujarat</i>	(1)	117
DESHPANDE, SATISH M. N. Srinivas. <i>Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar</i>	(2)	271-274
DWIVEDI, RANJIT Amita Baviskar. <i>In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts Over Development in the Narmada Valley</i>	(2)	255-261
GHOSH, ANJAN Ashis Nandy. <i>The Illegitimacy of Nationalism: Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self</i>	(2)	262-264
GUPTA, DIPANKAR M.S. Rana. <i>Bharatiya Kisan Union and Ch. Tikait</i>	(1)	111-112
HAIDER, SARASWATI Brian C. Aldrich and Ravinder S. Sandhu (eds). <i>Housing for the Urban Poor: Policy and Practice in Developing Countries.</i>	(1)	101-103
HAIDER, SARASWATI Joseph Cherian and K. V. Eswara Prasad. <i>Women, Work and Inequity: the Reality of Gender</i>	(2)	268-271
KARNA, M. N. Yunas Samad. <i>A Nation in Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937-1958</i>	(2)	294-296

Reviewer/Author/Title	Number	Pages
NAIR, GAYATRI Romy Borooah, Kathleen Cloud, Subadra Seshadri, T. S. Saraswathi, Jean T. Peterson, Amita Verma (eds). <i>Capturing Complexity: An Interdisciplinary Look at Women, Households and Development</i>	(2)	282-284
NONGBRI, TIPLUT Thomas R. Trautman. <i>Dravidian Kinship</i>	(2)	288-291
PATHAK, AVIJIT Terry Arendell. <i>Fathers and Divorce</i>	(2)	287-288
PATEL, TULSI D. Kantowsky. <i>An Indian Village through Letters and Pictures</i>	(1)	103-105
RAJARAM, N. Donald W. Attwood. <i>Raising Cane: The Political Economy of Sugar in Western India.</i>	(2)	267-268
RAO, S. SRINIVASA Roger Jeffery and Alaka M. Basu (eds). <i>Girls' Schooling, Women's Autonomy and Fertility Change in South Asia</i>	(2)	279-282
RAO, M. A. VASUDEVA Murray Milner, Jr. <i>Status and Sacredness: A General Theory of Status Relation and an Analysis of Indian Culture</i>	(2)	274-276
RIZVI, S. M. A. Wolfe Marshall. <i>Elusive Development</i>	(2)	293-294
SARASWATI, BAIDYANATH S. N. Eisenstadt. <i>Jewish Civilization: The Jewish Historical Experience in a Comparative Perspective</i>	(2)	284-286
SAHAY, GAURANG RANJAN Prem Chowdhry. <i>The Veiled Women: Shifting Gender Equation in Rural Haryana 1818-1900</i>	(2)	276-279
SHETH, N. R. B. S. Baviskar and Donald W. Attwood. <i>Finding the Middle Path: The Political Economy of Cooperation in Rural India</i>	(2)	264-267
SIKAND, YOGINDER T. N. Madan. <i>Muslim Communities of South Asia: Culture, Society and Power</i>	(1)	118-120

Reviewer/Author/Title	Number	Pages
SINGH, SUPRIYA Noeleen Heyzer and Gita Sen (eds). <i>Gender, Economic Growth and Poverty: Market Growth and State Planning in Asia and the Pacific</i>	(1)	112-114
SINHA, A. C. T. K. Oommen. <i>Alien Concepts and South Asian Reality: Responses and Reformulations</i>	(2)	291-292
SIVAKUMAR, S. S. Bina Agarwal. <i>A Field of One's Own</i>	(1)	97-101
THAPAN, MEENAKSHI H. Lorraine Radtke and Henderikus J. Stam (eds). <i>Power/Gender: Social Relations in Theory and Practice</i>	(1)	105-109
UPADHYA, CAROL Patricia Oberoi (ed.). <i>Family, Kinship and Heritage in India</i>	(1)	114-117
VISVANATHAN, SUSAN Teutonio R. De Souza (ed.). <i>Discoveries, Missionary Expansion and Asian Cultures</i>	(1)	120-122

## ANNOUNCEMENT

---

**XXIV All India Sociological Conference**  
22 - 24 December 1997, Osmania University  
Hyderabad

*Theme*  
**Fifty Years of India's Independence  
and Beyond**

*Panel Themes*  
Communication and Culture  
State, Market and Society  
Sociology in Post-Independent India  
Social Structure and Change  
Open Panel

*Symposia*  
Indian Society: Futuristic Perspective  
Challenges to Indian Sociology

**Papers for Discussion:** Participants are invited to contribute papers to any of the panels. Papers may be in the range of 2000-3000 words. Two copies of each contribution, along with an abstract in about 200-300 words may be sent to the **Organizing Secretary, XXIV All India Sociological Conference, Department of Sociology, Osmania University, Hyderabad 500 007 (Andhra Pradesh)**, latest by 21 November 1997. **Registration :** The registration fee for the conference (including delegate's contribution to hospitality charges) of Rs. 350 may be sent in the name of the Organising Secretary at the above address latest by 21 November 1997. On-the-spot registration fee will be Rupees four hundred only.

---

# PROBLEMS AND PARADOXES OF INDUCTIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE: A CRITIQUE OF RAMKRISHNA MUKHERJEE

Pradip Kumar Bose

## INDUCTIVE-INFERENTIAL METHOD

For more than two decades Ramkrishna Mukherjee has been engaged in developing an inductive methodology for social science. Mukherjee does this by differentiating between inductive-inferential and deductive-postivistic methods of research. On the basis of his preferred methodology Mukherjee then selects certain important themes from Indian sociology, as for instance, social change, social development and nation building, indicating how these could be conceived and developed.

Mukherjee's methodological formulation is centred around four questions, which he considers fundamental for a proper appraisal of a phenomenon. These are: What is it? How is it? Why is it? and, What will it be? An initial account of his formulation first appeared in his book *Social Indicators* (1975: 3; see also, Mukherjee 1972) and in greater detail in his subsequent volume *What Will it Be?* (1979). Since then he has reiterated the basic tenets of this method without any major revision in his subsequent publications (compare the chart in 1979: 14-16; and 1993: 157-59). It is only in his latest book (1993) that he adds a fifth question, namely, 'What should it be?' though without much elaboration. He only mentions that an answer to this question would make the appraisal much more complete. He points out that sociologists should also examine how the two questions, 'What will it be?' and 'What should it be?' can be included within the orbit of social sciences rather than leaving them to philosophical speculations (1993: 131).

The term he uses to explain the operation of this method is 'sciencing society' (Ibid.: 126) and he writes: 'Sciencing is not yet a frequently

---

Pradip Kumar Bose is on the faculty of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta 700 029

---

used expression; however, it aptly captures the pursuit of knowledge in order to systematically comprehend a phenomenon by answering five sequential questions: What is it? How is it? Why is it? What will it be? What should it be?' (Ibid.). From the answers to the five types of questions Mukherjee delineates the basic type and orientation of research. According to him the orientation is descriptive and classificatory with reference to the questions, 'What is it?' and 'How is it?' It becomes *explanatory* when the 'Why is it' question is added and *diagnostic* when 'What will it be?' is also addressed.

In the 'explanatory' mode of research, Mukherjee believes, a theory is often used in a 'deductive-positivistic' manner to answer the third question, but the answer is not always unequivocal (1979: 9; 1993: 150), while in descriptive and classificatory research, theory is of little relevance, as the strategy of research is 'fact-finding' and 'interpretation of fact' found with reference to the questions, 'What is it?' and 'How is it?' (1979: 9). While the space-time coordinates of descriptive and explanatory research form a closed circuit, in diagnostic research it is open at one end, that is why in diagnostic research, according to Mukherjee, it is possible to address the 'What will be?' question.

Since diagnostic research is based on an open system (space-time coordinates are free at the contemporary terminal), the usual method of answering the 'Why is it?' question, in terms of explanatory theory or empirically formulated hypothesis cannot be applied here. As Mukherjee writes:

It is now necessary to ascertain from the grassroots level the viability, propensity and proliferation of the system of variation in respect of different stimuli so as to predict, probabilistically, the future course of behaviour of the system. The question 'why is it' thus assumes a greater significance than for explanatory research, and all that is known and *knowable* regarding the system, from theory and empirical findings, will have to be marshalled together in order that the relevant theories and *a priori* hypotheses form a systematically ordered series of *alternate hypotheses*. These are to be tested against an appropriate null hypothesis in order to find an unequivocal answer to the ultimate question. Also, in order to facilitate the course of diagnosis and answer the question 'what will it be' evermore



precisely and comprehensively, the alternate hypothesis should be conceived to form an *infinite but enumerable* series and to emerge unrestrictedly from the field of variation dealing with the 'open' system. For the alternate hypothesis will be formulated successively in a fuller and better form along with our accumulation of knowledge in respect of this field of variation. The orientation of diagnostic research, therefore, must be inductive and inferential, and its methodology would involve a constant interaction between the deductive and the inductive techniques (1979: 10-11).

In other words, for a given phenomena, researches in explanatory mode will have different theories; however in the diagnostic mode, all these 'theories' will be given the status of 'alternate hypothesis', and all the known and knowable alternate hypotheses would constitute the 'field of variation' of the phenomenon. The efficiency of a particular hypothesis can then be tested on an inductive base in order to evaluate its relative efficiency vis-a-vis other such hypotheses.

For Mukherjee, different explanations about society are dependent on the subjective preference of a scholar who selects from 'infinite and enumerable' information-space some items that he considers meaningful to explain the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of society in some manner. The information-space, according to Mukherjee, is value-free because 'the items of information do not contain any intrinsic value as being wanted by anyone or not, as being desirable or undesirable or irrelevant to any person' (1989: 231; 1993: 131). Hence by selecting certain items, a scholar makes a primary evaluation of the value-free information space and thus by appropriating certain items of information-space subjectively, he turns that information into data, that is, as possessing a specific meaning.

It is in this manner that all available or possible scholars create 'an infinite but enumerable data space' out of 'the infinite but enumerable information space'. For instance, the 'what' and 'how' questions restrict the quest for information to mere description, and only those items are collected and consolidated out of the available information space that are considered relevant to the context. In addition to describing a phenomenon, if an explanation is sought, in that case to answer the 'why' question about the phenomenon, information necessary in the

context of the theory or hypothesis adopted as the yardstick for explanation are collected. In such cases, according to Mukherjee, researchers are concerned with the search of particular set of data in the given context, because as one adopts one or another established theory or previously formulated hypothesis as the yardstick for explanation, corresponding data spaces will, of course, emerge from the same information space. In diagnostic research, focus is on diagnosis and answering the 'what will it be' question of prediction, hence, here different explanations of a phenomenon are arranged in a series of alternate hypotheses, which include not only theories but also tentative hypotheses (1983: 4-5). In this case search is not for a particular set of data to explain the phenomenon, but to engage in diagnostic investigations on the relative efficiency of these explanations and, therefore, with various ways of constructing data-sets.

For Mukherjee there are two ways in which a theory can be utilized in social research: as a 'yardstick' to explain a phenomenon on a *deductive* base or as an 'alternate hypothesis' to be tested on an *inductive* base in order to appraise its *relative efficiency* vis-a-vis other such hypotheses (1979: 7). Mukherjee calls the first formulation as the structure-process-structure (SPS) syndrome for the appraisal of social reality, where a social scientist ascribes datum to a specific set of information items and thus deduces the social structure. Mukherjee writes:

But, then, we are confronted with many formulations of the structure-process-structure (SPS) syndrome for the appraisal of social reality. This is true not only to explain the causality of the present state of society but also to diagnose what the society will be in the near future. The point, therefore, is to ascertain that formulation of the SPS syndrome (or a particular combination of some of the available formulations) which reflects reality in the most precise, unequivocal and comprehensive manner (1993: 133).

While the method of individual SPS syndrome is 'deductive and positivistic' the method which will be able to infer probabilistically from all the available and possible SPS syndromes 'that SPS syndrome (or a particular combination of several SPS syndromes) which reflect reality

the most precisely, unequivocally and comprehensively' (1993: 135), must be inductive-inferential. But since this is a higher-order systematization, Mukherjee is in search of a 'yardstick' by which the relative-efficiency of the SPS syndromes should be judged. Mukherjee finds this 'yardstick' in the 'value of life', or what he calls as the four cardinal valuations of humankind, as against ordinal valuations of social theories. For him 'survival, security, prosperity and progress are thus the four cardinal values which are encountered by every human in all places, at all times, and with respect to every group of people' (1993: 136). For Mukherjee the universal validity of the four cardinal values for human existence is beyond question. However, as the cardinal valuation of life often influences the 'ordinal valuation of the SPS syndrome', hence, for Mukherjee, a method should be found to establish on a probability basis the SPS syndrome which is closest to the realization of the cardinal valuation of human kind. These value spaces can be systematically explored only on an inductive base, though in the ultimate analysis the relationship between the two kinds of valuation, or more generally the relationship between knowledge and reality, according to Mukherjee, will always remain asymptotic, as he states: 'It [knowledge] may very closely explicate reality, but never fully and finally. Therefore, science can evermore reduce the gap between the ordinal valuations and the cardinal valuation of humankind, but can never reduce the gap to zero' (1993: 139).

In his critical review of Indian sociology, Mukherjee (1979a) characterizes the main body of Indian sociology as being constrained by the theoretical and methodological limitations of a deductivist-positivist nature and argues that the existing level of knowledge can only be raised by adopting the inductive inferential orientation (Ibid.: 138-39). Mukherjee argues that inductive-inferential method is capable of handling a lot more variation than the deductive method and since this mode of research follows the principle of induction and inference on a probability basis, this method cannot easily be designated as positivist. It is an approach where the procedure rests upon the total social space of the indivisible elements of the properties of the phenomena to be examined from the bottom upwards, and not from top downwards as it is for the prevalent deductive-positivistic method.

### PROBLEMS OF INDUCTION

It is often said the inference from the hypothesis and initial conditions to the prediction is deductive, but the inference in the opposite direction, from the truth of the prediction to the hypothesis is inductive. Inductive inferences do not pretend to establish their results with certainty; instead they confirm them or make them probable. The whole trouble with looking at the matter this way, as Mukherjee does, is that it appears to constitute an automatic transformation of deductive fallacies into correct inductive arguments. When we discover, to our dismay, that our favorite deductive argument is invalid, we simply rescue it by saying that we never intended it to be deductive in the first place, but that it is a valid induction. With reference to this situation, the logician Morris R. Cohen is said to have quipped, 'A logic book is divided into two parts; in the first (on deduction) the fallacies are explained, and in the second (on induction) they are committed' (Salmon 1968: 143). Surely inductive argument, if it plays a central role in scientific method, must have better credentials.

When questions about deductive validity arise, they can usually be resolved in a formal manner by reference to an appropriate logical system. It is an unfortunate fact that far less attention has been paid to the foundational questions that arise in connection with the empirical sciences and their logic. When questions of inductive validity arise, there is no well-established formal discipline to which they can be referred for definitive solution. A number of systems of inductive logic have been proposed, some in greater and some in lesser detail, but none is more than rudimentary, and none is widely accepted as basically correct (Pap 1962). Questions of inductive correctness are more often referred to scientific or philosophical intuitions, and they are notoriously unreliable guides.

Mukherjee's methodology falls into the empiricist tradition in social science, and this paper might just as well have been titled 'Empiricism and Induction' for it is the empiricists, by and large, who show the greatest (positive) interest in induction. Therefore a brief look at the role of induction in empiricist epistemology is in order and might help to provide a setting for many of the discussions below. A cursory survey of the empiricist tradition from Hume to Reichenbach, Feigl, and Salmon

clearly reveals the vital role of induction and probability. In fact, with little, if any, distortion, induction might be viewed as the cornerstone of empiricism: it is central to epistemology, to the theory of concept formation, as well as to the justification of all factual knowledge. What is perhaps not so obvious is that such emphasis calls for a comprehensive theory, not merely bits and pieces. This, then is the task confronting the empiricist—to construct a full-fledged system of inductive logic which is consistent (i. e., free of paradoxes and inconsistencies) and reasonably complete (Bose 1986, 1995). The construction of such a system—and hence the viability of empiricism—hinges, in large part, on the solution of the following problems: 1) *Hume's Problem*. What rationally justifies any inference from the observed to the unobserved, the known to the unknown? (Black 1958; Feigl 1963; Hempel 1966; Reichenbach 1949; Salmon 1968); 2) *Hempel's Paradox*. What is confirming evidence (positive instances) for a hypothesis? (Hempel 1945, 1965; Mackie 1963); and 3) *Goodman's New Riddle of Induction*. What hypotheses are confirmed by positive instances? (Hempel 1966; Leblanc 1963). In principle, until these problems are solved, inductive logic remains in a rather low state; and consequently, empiricism takes on the appearance of being quite heavily dependent on wishful thinking or dogma concerning probability and induction.

In contrast to Mukherjee's contention, it should be stressed that inductive inference must not be thought of as an effective method of discovery, which by a mechanical procedure leads from observational data to appropriate hypotheses or theories. This misconception underlies what might be called the narrow inductivist view of social scientific inquiry, a view that is well illustrated by Mukherjee's pronouncement which can be summarized as follows: first, all facts would be observed and recorded, *without selection* or *a priori* guess as to their relative importance; second, the observed and recorded facts would be analysed, compared, and classified, *without hypothesis* or *postulates* other than those necessarily involved in the logic of thought; third, from this analysis of facts, generalization would be inductively drawn as to the relations, classificatory or causal, between them; fourth, further inductive research would be undertaken employing inferences from previously established generalizations.

It need hardly be argued in detail that this conception of 'scientific procedure', and of the role induction plays in it, is untenable; the reasons have been set forth by many writers. Let us just note that an inquiry conforming to this idea would never go beyond the first stage, for—presumably to safeguard scientific objectivity—no initial hypotheses about the mutual relevance and interconnections of facts are to be entertained in this stage, and as a result, there would be no criteria for the selection of the facts to be recorded. The initial stage would therefore degenerate into an indiscriminate and interminable gathering of data from an unlimited range of observable facts, and the inquiry would be totally without aim or direction. Similar difficulties would beset the second stage—if it could ever be reached—for the classification or comparison of data again requires criteria. These are normally suggested by hypotheses about the empirical connections between various features of the 'facts' under study. But the conception just cited would prohibit the use of such hypotheses, and the second stage of inquiry as here envisaged would again lack aim and direction.

The celebrated problem of induction, which still lacks any generally accepted solution, includes under a single heading a variety of distinct, if related, problems. These problems may be briefly described as (a) the problem of 'justification', (b) the problem of 'differential appraisal' and, (c) the 'analytical problem'. One can distinguish the three problems as follows:

- 1) Justification: Why, if at all, is it reasonable to accept the conclusions of certain inductive arguments as true—or at least probably true? Why, if at all, is it reasonable to employ certain rules of inductive inference.
- 2) Differential appraisal: Why is one inductive conclusion preferable to another as better supported? Why is one rule of inductive inference preferable to another as more reliable or more deserving of rational trust.
- 3) Analytical problem: What is it that renders some inductive arguments rationally acceptable? What are the criteria for deciding that one rule of inductive inference is superior to another?

While Mukherjee believes that the 'inductive-inferential' method is self justificatory (because for him it is better than what he calls the 'deductive-positivistic' method) he does not really go into the more intricate, foundational, justificatory and analytical problems of induction.

The three problems mentioned above, however, cannot be pursued separately: a comprehensive general defence of inductive procedures involves specification, *inter alia*, of legitimate forms of inductive argument, and selection between alternative inductive rules or methods must rely, explicitly or not, upon determination of what, if anything, makes an inductive argument 'sound'. Using Mukherjee's argument a little differently, we can say that the *why* of inductive argument cannot profitably be isolated from the *how*.

Locke once said that induction from experience or empirical investigation 'may provide us convenience, not science'. A demand that induction be justified arises, of course, from supposed deficiency or imperfection; induction always looks inadequate when compared with supposedly superior certainty of demonstrative reasoning. The nagging conviction that induction somehow falls short of the ideals of rationality perfectly exemplified in valid deductive argument has made the problem of induction needlessly intractable.

The various options suggested in response to Hume's problem can be summarized as follows:

- a) Hume's challenge cannot be met, hence inductive argument is indefensible, and ought to be expunged from any reasoning purporting to be rational.
- b) In the light of Hume's criticisms, inductive arguments as normally presented need improvement, either i) by adding further premises or, ii) by changing the conclusions into statements of probability, which seems to be Mukherjee's approach. However, in either case a conclusion's validity is expected to follow demonstratively from the premises, and inductive logic will be reconstructed as a branch of applied deductive logic, as we shall see.
- c) The pragmatic option, namely, if induction cannot be validated, it can at least be vindicated.

### PROBABILITY AND AMBIGUITY

Since Mukherjee's argument derives from the empiricist epistemology where induction is closely associated with enumeration and, therefore, with frequency, he has no alternative but to accept the probabilistic approach to induction, though he does not elaborate his notion of probability. The basic argument in this case is that if there is no prospect of plugging the deductive gap between A and B by adding further premises known to be true, then perhaps the same can be achieved by weakening the conclusion. If B does not follow from A, why not be satisfied with a more modest conclusion of the form 'probably B' or perhaps 'B has such and such a probability relative to A'?

The most rigorous attempt of arguments of this sort so far available (Keynes, for example) have encountered severe technical difficulties. It is essential to such a programme, that the probability of a generalization relative to an unbroken series of confirmatory instances steadily approach unity. The conditions necessary for this to be possible are at least that the generalization has an initial non-zero probability and that infinitely many of the confirmatory instances be independent, in the sense of having less than maximal probability of occurrence, given the already accumulated evidence. At this point, those who search for supreme inductive principles find themselves with empty hands. Mill, for instance, relied on 'simple enumeration', defending it on the grounds of universal applicability; Keynes, abandoning his empiricist principle, and arguing in the fashion of Kant suggested that the ultimate principles rest upon 'some direct synthetic knowledge' of the general regularity of the universe. This principle hardly suffices to satisfy these conditions; subsequent criticism has shown that even more rigorous conditions are needed. Some have argued that the desired asymptotic convergence will result only if in the long run every instance of the generalization is scrutinized—which would certainly render the theory completely useless in practical application. For all his importance as a founder of confirmation theory, Keynes must be judged a failure.

At this point it will not be out of place to mention that though the probability calculus was established early in the 17th century, hardly any serious attention was given to the analysis of the meaning of the concept of probability until the latter part of the 19th century. Even then, there is



no real consensus on this question; there are, instead, three distinct interpretations of the probability concept, each with its own adherents. *A fortiori*, there is no widely accepted answer to the question of the nature of the prior probabilities, for they seem to be especially problematic in character. Among the three leading probability theories, the *logical theory* regards probability as an *a priori* measure that can be assigned to propositions or states of affairs, the *personalistic theory* regards probability as a *subjective measure* of degrees of belief, and the *frequency theory* regards probability as a physical characteristic of types of events.

The logical theory is the direct descendent of the famous classical theory of Laplace. According to the classical theory, probability is the ratio of favourable to equally possible cases. The equi-possibility of cases, which is nothing other than the equal probability of these cases, is determined *a priori* on the basis of a *principle of indifference*, namely, two cases are equally likely if there is no reason to prefer one to the other. This principle gets into deep logical difficulty. This contradiction, known as the Bertrand paradox, brings out the fundamental difficulty with any method of assigning probabilities *a priori*. Such *a priori* decisions have an unavoidable arbitrary component to them, and in this case, the arbitrary component gives rise to two equally reasonable, but incompatible, ways of assigning probabilities.

The personalistic interpretation is the 20th century successor of an older and more naive subjective concept. According to the crude subjective view, a probability is no more nor less than a subjective degree of belief; it is a measure of our ignorance. Modern personalists do not interpret probabilities as subjective degrees of belief, but rather, as coherent degrees of belief. To say that degrees of belief are coherent means that they are related in such manner as to satisfy the conditions imposed by the mathematical calculus of probability. Personalists interpret degrees of belief that violate the mathematical calculus as analogous to logical inconsistency and recommend some revision or adjustment to bring these degrees into conformity with the mathematical calculus. The chief objection to the personalist view is that it is not objective. Whether and to what extent the lack of objectivity is actually harmful, is a different question. Though Mukherjee does not discuss his notion of probability, the interpretation that he implicitly accepts is the

frequency theory, the theory that regards a probability as a relative frequency of occurrence in a large sequence of events. It seems evident that there are many contexts where the frequency concept of probability seems well suited to the use of statistical techniques, for example, in quantum mechanics, but it is much more dubious that the frequency interpretation is at all applicable to such matters as the probability of a scientific hypothesis in the light of empirical evidence. In this case where are we to find the large classes and long sequences to which to refer to our probabilities of hypotheses? This difficulty has seemed insuperable to most authors who have dealt with the problem. The general conclusion has been that the frequency interpretation is fine in certain contexts, but we need a radically different probability concept if we are to deal with the probability of hypotheses.

Inductivists prefer the frequency theory, just like Mukherjee, because here probability statements are empirical statements describing the number of times some event has happened relative to the number of times it might have happened (the modern propensity theory of probability is closely related to the frequency theory; Kyburg 1974). For example, if it is observed over the years that a steady 35 per cent of 18-year olds in India attend university, then there is a 35 per cent probability of 18-year olds in India going to university in the current year. But there are difficulties with the frequency theory when considering unbounded series of events: for example, to avoid being misled by short-run variations, such as the university attendance rate of 18-year olds in India during the Second World War, it is necessary to define probability as the limit to which the frequency tends in the long run. Immediately the problem of induction reappears as the problem of trying to estimate the long run or limiting frequency from a finite run. The uniformity principle has to be invoked: if the future resembles the (recent) past, then there will be a 35 per cent probability of 18-year olds in India going to university. Without the uniformity principle, an observed relative frequency in a finite run is compatible with any limiting frequency, depending on what events happen in the future.

Carnap (1950) recognizing this problem with the frequency theory, turned to an alternative conception of probability in which it is a logical relation between evidence and a conclusion. This view of probability was developed by Carnap (1954) into confirmation theory, where the

aim is to provide a logic of induction, precise rules for calculating the degree of confirmation that a particular set of evidence propositions give a particular conclusion. Despite the sophistication of Carnap's confirmation theory it faces two related difficulties (Bose 1986). First, because a proposition might be confirmed by one set of evidence statement but disconfirmed by other sets, the confirmationist must insist upon the requirement of total evidence before calculating the degree of confirmation of the proposition. Second, Carnap's system of inductive logic assigns a probability of zero to scientific laws formulated as unrestricted generalizations, regardless of the evidence available, since no finite amount of evidence can confirm such generalization of potentially infinite scope.

Even if modern developments in confirmation theory overcame these difficulties and it became possible to assign a non-zero probability to a law by successfully specifying the degree of confirmation on the basis of all available evidence, this approach to the problem of induction entails modification. A modification has to be made in the deductive-nomological account such that it no longer relies on universal laws but only on probability statements. An appropriately modified scheme called the inductive-statistical explanation has been described by Hempel (1965). However, in Hempel's scheme, probabilistic laws cannot be used to explain or predict the occurrence of singular events. Some authors, persuaded by the difficulties encountered in attempting to justify induction probabilistically, suggest that it is more appropriate to offer a pragmatic justification (Feigl 1952; Salmon 1961). Induction is a rule of the scientific game. Critics of the pragmatic justification of induction argue that it provides no epistemological criteria for discriminating between good and bad inductions. It justifies all inductions equally and hence is no guide for the practice of science, for the choice of laws (Black 1954).

Though Mukherjee illustrates his inductive formulation with appropriate examples, in none of his illustrations is he able to compute the probability of his hypotheses as he cannot effectively demarcate their limits. Hence most of them can be considered as unbounded series. The lack of any probabilistic association of these hypotheses is also significant because, as we have seen, the 'what will be' question is an inalienable part of his theoretical construction.

There is one final related comment to be made upon the frequency theory (the theory that Mukherjee implicitly accepts), although it is a cautionary comment on all the theories of probability. Suppose we consider the probability statement: 'The probability of a sociologist being a philosopher is  $p$ .' Although this may give us some degree of numerical confidence, our confidence in the general probability statement itself, as Strawson (1952) and other philosophers point out, is not established thus. For, the latter will depend upon whether the general probability statement is founded upon a sufficient number of well-chosen observations—and this is a matter for the *judgement*. So that our reasons for believing a probability statement are not entirely numerical. In other words, the concept of probability is not entirely a matter of numbers.

### INDUCTIVISM AND POSITIVISM

A constant refrain that one witnesses in Mukherjee's writing is that the deductive method is positivistic; in fact, he always refers to this form of logic as 'deductive-positivistic', whereas he believes that inductive method is somehow free from the positivistic trap. That this is a mistaken understanding of positivism, we shall see in a moment. But before that some general comments on Mukherjee's views on sociology and social science.

In his understanding of social science Mukherjee shares the positivistic view that phenomena dealt with by the social sciences are qualitatively no different from those of the natural sciences. This being the case, the methodology of the latter is appropriate for the former. The principal aim of sociology for him is to formulate a system of empirically grounded theories that will ultimately be used for accurate prediction of social phenomena (answer to the 'what will be' question). Sociology, for him, has a technical character and the basic thrust of his approach has been towards the production of objective knowledge that is open to quantification (i.e., precise measurement) and demonstrable proof. In fact his favourite citation that appears in many of his writings (1979: 13; 1983: 9; 1989: 30) is from Lord Kelvin reminding everyone that 'when you can measure what you are speaking and express it in numbers, you know something about it, but when you cannot measure it,

when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind'. Equating knowledge with measurement is, of course, a very narrow and naive form of positivism, deriving its support from empiricism and scientism, from the belief that social science enquiry would be successful, if it were based on objective, value-free measurements and quantification.

Coming back more specifically to the question of inductivism and positivism, we can trace its roots to the Comtean variety of knowledge formation where positivism as a theory of knowledge prescribes that the only kind of sound knowledge available to human kind is that of science grounded in observation. Both inductivism and hypothetico-deductivism amplify the Comtean variety of positivism by describing two different ways in which 'scientific' laws and theories are to be related to experience. Positivism in its inductive form is a theory of 'scientific method' according to which 'science' progresses by inducing laws from observational and experimental evidence (Bose 1995). This is a tradition that goes back to Francis Bacon. As we have discussed, since induction does not justify our accepting the truth of the unrestricted universal laws, this has consequences for the logical-positivists, for they require laws for sound explanations; but if laws cannot be conclusively verified by experience then they are metaphysical according to the principle of verifiability. Induction is considered to be in need of justification because it is argued that it is deficient as compared with deduction. In valid deductive inferences, premises conclusively support conclusions (that is, entail them) whereas in inductive inferences they do not. Valid deductions are 'truth-transmitting', whereas sound inductions are only 'likelihood transmitting'.

Related to empiricism and induction there is another conception of positivism in sociology, namely, a theory of knowledge according to which the 'natural science of sociology' consists of the collection and statistical analysis of quantitative data about society. The genealogy of this particular type of positivism can be traced back to Durkheim who added to Comte's abstract philosophical themes another, quite independent tradition, that of statistics. Most notably in his book *Suicide* (1897) he brought together 19th century Comtean social philosophy and the collection and analysis of quantified social facts. This type of positivism is identical with traditional empiricism: positive (as opposed

to theological and metaphysical) knowledge is empirical knowledge, which is the only sound (or 'scientific') knowledge because observation (or more generally, experience) is the only sound source of knowledge. This position is opposed to the rationalist one where reason provides indubitable truths about the world, or the dialectical view knowledge, according to which the only source of sound knowledge is praxis.

A strong positivistic element in Mukherjee's method is due to his inclusion of the 'what will be' question, that is, constructing a system in which prediction becomes a necessary component of meaningful social research. This function of prediction evolves out of the positivistic notion of the unity of science and the so-called scientific method. Though it must be said that even if prediction is interpreted probabilistically, probabilistic laws cannot be used to explain or predict singular state of affairs. Prediction also accepts an unproved assumption about the 'uniformity of nature', which might be more fully stated as 'all uniformities observed hitherto will continue to obtain everywhere and for ever'.

Mukherjee's inductive social science shares all the major elements of positivistic thinking that we have discussed and he continues to pursue a programme aimed at constructing a natural science of society centering on causal laws derived from or tested by observational data with the aid of statistical techniques and he is prone to treat the philosophical problems as mere technical difficulties. Among this group of methodological and statistical technicians, doubts about positivist presuppositions in social analysis are assumed to be resolvable by greater attention to the details of data collection and statistical techniques.

### **DEDUCTIVE RECONSTRUCTION OF INDUCTIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE**

One of the ironies of Mukherjee's methodological prescriptions is that though he rejects the deductive model as positivistic, inadequate, subjective, value-loaded (1993: 131-135), he ultimately takes recourse to the deductive reconstruction of his inductive methodology! This particular defence of induction is not new, some adopted it quite consciously, while others inadvertently fell into this trap.

The effort to provide justification for induction through a reconstruction of inductive arguments so as to make them valid has chiefly taken two forms: a) *search for supreme inductive principles*; and b) *recourse to probability*. In the first case, if, for instance, events occurred purely at random, it would be impossible to make successful inductions; conversely, if inductions of a certain sort do systematically produce true conclusions, there must be a contingent regularity in the universe that should be capable of expression in the form of supreme principles or postulates of induction. Only if such principles/postulates are true can inductions be sound; they must therefore be the assumed but unexpressed premises of all sound inductive arguments.

Favoured candidates for the role of such enabling postulates have been the principle that the future resembles the past (Hume), a general principle of causation to the effect that every event has a sufficient cause (Mill), a principle of spatio-temporal homogeneity, which makes locations and dates causally irrelevant (Mill again), and a principle of limited independent variety ensuring that the attributes of individuals cluster together in a finite number groups (Keynes). Mukherjee introduces his own supreme principles in terms of what he calls 'four cardinal values' which according to him are universally valid. He poses these values as assuming a homogeneity over time and space and asserts that 'survival, security, prosperity and progress are thus the four cardinal values which are encountered by every human in all places, at all times, and with respect to every group of people' (1993: 136). Any of these supreme principles, if true, records the presence in the universe of a certain global regularity or order which permits inductive procedures to produce the desired true conclusions. In other words, the validity of the inductive method reduces in the end to deductive procedures. One can argue that if supreme premises can be known to be true, the remaining process of inference becomes trivial.

However, there is a serious problem: how can the desired supreme premises ever be known to be true. Since appeal to induction is excluded at this point on the score of circularity, and since the principles themselves cannot be analytic if they are to serve their purpose, there seems no recourse at all. The point simply is, how can Mukherjee show his cardinal principles to be true? At this point those who search for supreme inductive principles find themselves with empty hands. The

conclusion seems inescapable that any attempt to show that there are general ontological guarantees for induction is doomed to failure from the outset.

In view of this circularity and empirical falsity of induction, another way of justifying induction by reconstructing it as deduction has been tried. This approach, as we have discussed, instead of bolstering the premises leads to the dilution of the conclusion. It involves converting the conclusion of an inductive inference into a probability statement. Like Mukherjee, this approach still has many adherents. It involves converting the conclusion of an inductive inference into a probability statement. If there is no prospect of plugging the deductive gap between A and B by adding further premises known to be true, then perhaps the same end can be achieved by weakening the conclusion. If B does not follow from A, why not be satisfied with a more modest conclusion of the form 'probably B'?

The extent to which the recourse to probability will accomplish the task will depend upon the interpretation of the concept of probability. With empirical interpretation of probability (e.g. frequency theory), the probability conclusion covertly refers to finite or infinite sets of events not covered by the given premises. The inductive leap remaining in the reconstructed argument will thus still leave the problem of induction unsolved. If, however, probability is construed in some logical way, the amended conclusion will say less than the premises and will therefore be untouched by subsequent empirical test; the deductive validity of the reconstructed argument will be saved only at the cost of rendering problematic its relevance to prediction and empirical control. In converting a purportedly inductive argument into a valid deductive one, the very point of the original argument—that is, to risk a prediction concerning the yet unknown—seems to be destroyed.

By postulating a supreme principle, or what he calls a cardinal principle and also by arguing for probability, Mukherjee brings back the deductive mode very much into his scheme. In spite of his best efforts and his apparent rejection of the deductivist mode of inference, it creeps in stealthily into his framework and takes over his whole scheme—a fatal flaw that virtually demolishes his edifice.



## REFERENCES

- Black, Max. 1954. 'Pragmatic' Justification of Induction' in Ibid. *Problems of Analysis: Philosophical Essays*, pp. 157-90. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- . 1958. 'Self-Supporting Inductive Arguments', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 55: 718-725.
- Bose, Pradip Kumar. 1986. 'Social Research as Inductive Process', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21 (25-26): 1105-106.
- . 1995. *Research Methodology*. New Delhi: Indian Council of Social Science Research.
- Carnap, R. 1950. *Logical Foundation of Probability*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1954. 'The Two Concepts of Probability', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 5: 513-532.
- Feigl, H. 1952. 'Validation and Vindication', in W. Sellers and J. Hospers (eds), *Readings in Ethical Theory*, pp. 667-80. New York: Appleton Century Crofts.
- . 1963. 'On Meaning and the Limits of Justification', in Max Black (ed.), *Philosophical Analysis: A Collection of Essays*, pp. 113-131. Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice Hall.
- Hempel, C. G. 1945. 'Studies in the Logic of Confirmation', *Mind*, 54 (21): 102-12.
- . 1965. *Aspects of Scientific Explanation*. New-York: The Free Press.
- . 1966. 'Recent Problems of Induction', in Robert G. Colodny (ed.), *Mind and Cosmos: Essays in Contemporary Science and Philosophy*, pp. 112-134. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press.
- Keynes, J. M. 1921. *A Treatise on Probability*. London: Macmillan.
- Kyburg, H. E. 1974. 'Propensity and Probabilities', *British Journal of Philosophy of Science*, 24: 358-75.
- Leblanc, Huguès. 1963. 'That Positive Instances are no Help', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 60: 453-62.
- Mackie, J. L. 1963. 'The Paradox of Confirmation', *The British Journal of Philosophy of Science*, 13: 265-77.
- Mukherjee, Ramkrishna. 1972. 'On the Mode of Social Research', *The Indian Journal of Sociology*, 3 (1-2): 55-68.
- . 1975. *Social Indicators*. Delhi: MacMillan.
- . 1979. *What Will it Be?*. Bombay: Allied.
- . 1979a. *Sociology of Indian Sociology*. Bombay: Allied.
- . 1983. *Classifications in Social Research*. Albany: State University of New-York.
- . 1989. *The Quality of Life: Valuation in Social Research*. New-Delhi: Sage.
- . 1993. *Systematic Sociology*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Pap, Arthur. 1962. *An Introduction to Philosophy of Science*. New York: The Free Press.
- Reichenbach, Hans. 1949. *Theory of Probability*. California: University of California Press.
- Salmon, W. C. 1961. 'Vindication and Induction', in H. Feigl and G. E. Maxwell (eds.), *Current Issues in Philosophy of Science*, pp. 245-56. New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winson.
- . 1968. 'Inquiries into the Foundations of Science', in David L. Arm (ed.), *Vistas in Science*, pp. 139-58. New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press.
- Strawson, P. F. 1952. *Introduction to Logical Theory*. London: Methuen.
- Wesley, W. C. 1963. 'On Vindicating Induction', in H. E. Kyburg and E. Nagel (eds.), *Induction: Some Current Issues*, pp. 211-234. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press.

# INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS VERSUS COLLECTIVE RIGHTS: THE DEBATE ON THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OF CANADA

Toby Morantz

## INTRODUCTION

For many years in Canada, Native Peoples find that theirs is not a problem of being visible, as indigenous peoples in other countries experience, but getting recognized as Indigenous Peoples with full rights to self-determination, as proclaimed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is this recognition that they demand. As for their visibility, it has not always been consistently high but on July 11, 1990, it was at its highest in the last 100 years.

On this date, there began a Western-style stand-off that was to last some 77 days when Mohawks of Kanesatake joined by those of Kahnawake, clashed with the Provincial police over the town of Oka's insistence on appropriating a sacred Mohawk ground to expand a municipal golf course (Miller 1992: 216). Throughout this long, bitter period the Federal and Provincial governments seemed apathetic to the Native People's long-standing grievances over land. When the Oka crisis, as it came to be known, was finally over, instead of taking measures to resolve the issues, a Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was set up—a typical Canadian remedy for the open wounds afflicting its body politic.<sup>1</sup>

The commission produced a report which is extensive, obliging me to focus on only some of its concerns. It held to a central assumption that the Indian Bands,<sup>2</sup> under the control of the Federal Government, would soon be ruled under a form of self-government. These provisions and recommendations accordingly form the main discussion in this paper.

---

Toby Morantz is on the faculty of the Department of Anthropology, McGill University, Montreal H3A 2T7, Canada

**Outline of the Report**

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was launched in August 1991, charged with the mandate to enquire into 16 concerns of all the three Native Peoples—Indians, Metis and Inuit.<sup>3</sup> These requirements covered such matters as spiritual well-being, education, self-government, justice, health, and so on.<sup>4</sup> The commission consisted of seven members of whom four were Aboriginal persons and three of the members were women. They held public consultation meetings across the country and hired a staff to produce reports on specific topics. In all, they visited 96 communities and heard briefs from 2,067 people, generating 75,000 pages of transcribed testimony. They launched 350 research projects and received 228 completed research reports (RCAP 1996, 5: 290-98). The commission recruited a large number of Native Peoples as researchers and staff. The report was completed in 1995. Review of each volume and translation into French and English took another year. When it was released to the public in November 1996 five years had passed and 50 million Canadian dollars had been spent to produce this mammoth report of 3,500 pages organized into five volumes, and containing 429 recommendations. This paper can examine only some of its constituent parts.

**Development of Nations**

The category of Aboriginal Peoples includes: status Indians, non-status Indian, Metis and Inuit. The non-status Indians are people who, for a variety of historical reasons, were not registered with the Federal Government but continue to retain their identity as Indians. Metis are a people who, as descendants of Indians and Europeans (mainly French) in the West, developed as a distinct cultural group and were recognized as such in a constitutional act of 1870 (the Manitoba Act). The Inuit occupy the Arctic regions of Canada and are distinct from the other Native Peoples. Here, I focus on the status Indians numbering 438,000, who are members of 542 separate Bands, occupying 2240 reserves which are areas set aside by the Federal Government for their exclusive use (RCAP 1996, 1: 15-23).

With so many separate Bands, the Royal Commission was faced with the problem of finding a suitable form of government that could be adapted to the needs of so many separate communities, living in diverse

social, economic, cultural and physical surroundings. To solve the problem the commission used as its main principle the idea of self-government. This principle had began attracting attention in Canada ever since the new Constitution Act of 1982 guaranteed Native Peoples their 'aboriginal rights', a term that was left undefined. These rights, in legal judgements and academic writings, have come to refer to the rights of indigenous peoples to continue to practice those activities and ways of life in which they were engaged at the time of first European settlement.<sup>5</sup> One of those fundamental rights is recognized as self-governance (Magnet 1993: 949). Since the 1980s, few politicians have challenged the notion that Native Peoples are entitled to self-government in the form of a limited sovereign status, which is left undefined. Canadian politicians have even spoken of a 'third order' of government: Federal, Provincial and Aboriginal (Cassidy and Bish 1989: 156). But how is one to achieve this?

The commission's solution is to suggest that these 542 Bands reconstitute themselves by amalgamating into nations. They opted for using nation as an organizing principle in recognition of the fact that single communities were too small (many having only a few hundred persons) to provide effective government. In international law, also it is 'peoples' who are vested with rights to self-determination (RCAP 1996, 2: 178). The commission estimates there are from 60-80 nations that would be formed in this way, based on a common language, history, territorial use, and so on. In an exercise to see how this might work, the commission's researchers grouped all the Indian Bands by language and cultural identity and came up with 56 identifiable groups (RCAP 1996, 3: 1-18). If the 438,000 Indians formed 56 nations then, on the average, there would be about 7,800 people per nation.

A nation is not a racial group; the report is adamant about this. Very recently, the Mohawks of Kahnawake began applying a rule of 50 per cent 'blood quantum' as the measure to determine membership (Alfred 1995: 169). This has long been the measure used in the U. S. where Indians are recognized as such according to whether they have 1/4th Indian blood or are 1/8th, 1/16th or 1/32nd Indian. It is so demarcated on identity cards. However, for the Royal Commission, a nation is to be determined on cultural terms, not racial. They point out how the Aboriginal Peoples, although stemming historically from the original

peoples in North America, do nevertheless have a mixed genetic heritage. They underline the fact that as political entities they have the capacity to evolve over time and change in their internal composition (RCAP 1996, 5: 155; 2: 180).

Thus, for them, the nation is composed of cultural criteria—a collective sense of national identity based on common history, language, traditions, political consciousness, spirituality, laws, and the like. Furthermore, they note a nation must be of sufficient size and capacity to enable it to assume and exercise powers and responsibilities and it must, as well, constitute the majority of the permanent population of a certain territory. So for the commission, a nation has a collective consciousness, is of a viable size and has a territorial base.

As for membership in these nations, the commission identified a number of norms to measure eligibility of membership or citizenship. Some of these are self-identification, acceptance by the community, a common language, place of residence, birthplace, among others. However, there was never to be any discrimination between men and women. This aboriginal citizenship is to be recognized by the Canadian Government as a dual citizenship and be so recognized on Canadian passports in which the Aboriginal national citizenship would also be stated (Ibid.: 161).

After establishing the nation as the key organizing principle the commission based almost all of its recommendations on this principle. For the commission, only nations have the right to self-determination and only at the national level would they be viable enough to exercise the right to self-governance. Each nation would have nation-to-nation dealings with the other governments and Canada would become a multi-national confederacy.

### **Self-Governance**

Although the concept of self-governance has been around for about 15 years, the commissioners took care to argue for its acceptance, appealing to international law and drawing on the inherent rights guaranteed in the Constitution Act of 1982. Section 35 (1) of the act reads: 'The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed' (Magnet 1993: 942). As earlier noted, these existing rights were not spelled out and it was left to subsequent

court cases to delineate them. Given the undefined nature of these rights and the criticisms by some academics that various Supreme Court judgements have been too liberal in defining them, the commissioners perceived the need to argue vigorously for establishing the concept of self-government as central to their recommendations. The criticisms are not idle but ones which merit serious consideration and debate.

Much of the discussion of aboriginal rights is consistent with the ongoing Canadian debate of collective rights vs. individual rights. This is in regard to the constitutional status of the predominantly French-speaking Province of Quebec within the Canadian federation and whether it should be permitted special rights. Most Canadian government leaders outside of Quebec argue for a constitution based on individual rights; Quebec pleads that recognizing collective rights is what will ensure their cultural and linguistic integrity. Obviously this is a debate that applies to Native Peoples, as well. As for the particular case of self-government among Native Peoples, there are also those who say that resorting to a third order of government would further divide the country and that a society seeks unity not divisions (Alan Cairns, RCAP Conference, February 1, 1997). Yet, another criticism of such self-government is that any small-scale society is too factionalized to enable fair governance and leadership, what with the kind of economic and development powers such leaders would come to possess. Effective government for all would be seriously threatened also because these national governments would have economic and political powers out of proportion to their size and expertise (Tom Flanagan, RCAP Conference, February 1, 1997). Nevertheless, for the commission, self-government is an inherent right to which Aboriginal Peoples in Canada are entitled. The commission did not dictate the type of self-government to which each nation need subscribe but set out three types of governance.

1. *Nation Government*—by the nation which would exercise 'core jurisdiction in most matters' (RCAP 1996, 2: 250).
2. *Public Government*—organized over a geographically defined territory that would 'serve a constituency of residents including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people' but the rights of the Aboriginal residents may be differentiated to allow the Aboriginal

majority to retain constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights . . . as in renewable resource harvesting' (Ibid.: 267).<sup>6</sup>

3. *Community of Interest Government*—not land-based or territorial but based on such matters as common interests in cultural and spiritual education, housing, economic development. Membership would be based on Aboriginal identity and voluntary affiliation. In this case, the jurisdiction and authority would be limited. An example would be such a government's location in an urban area that might govern over such areas as education, welfare, health (Ibid.: 273).

Aware that these are only models, the commissioners invite each nation to alter the model of government they choose in order to 'reflect particular aspirations, customs, culture, traditions and values' (Ibid. 1996, 5: 160). At the same time, they invoke the principle that the rights and interests of resident non-citizens on the nation's territory be protected, through laws that are applicable to all and through representation in the governing bodies.

As for the relations of these 56 Indian or Aboriginal governments with the Government of Canada, the commission establishes that the Aboriginal governments would be one of three orders of government (as stated), that is, Federal, Provincial and Aboriginal. The governments making up these three orders are sovereign within their several spheres and hold their powers by virtue of their inherent or constitutional status rather than by delegation. This means that the Aboriginal governments are not municipal governments, which are delegated powers by the Provincial governments that are subject to revision. By contrast, the powers of an Aboriginal government would be inherently or constitutionally set and not subject to decisions of the other two governments over these spheres of powers (R. Schultz, personal communications, March 1997).

As part of the 1982 Constitution Act, there is in Canada a Charter of Rights and Freedoms that governs, among other relations, equality between men and women. The commissioners are explicit that Section 28 which provides that 'rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Charter are guaranteed equally to male and female persons' (Magnet 1993: 880) be applicable to Aboriginal governments. This is a major concern of

Indian women who fear that Aboriginal governments and policies could be modelled on older political systems that excluded women (De Vall 1995; Polcies 1995). Mindful of this concern, although the commissioners believe that the Canadian Charter must be somewhat more flexible to take into account distinctive philosophies, traditions and cultural practices of Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP 1996, 5: 163), this provision of equality between men and women was not negotiable.

With the establishment of national governments, the Royal commission recommends a restructuring of Indian relations with the Federal Government and it calls for the abolition of the existing Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development<sup>7</sup> to be replaced by two departments—one of Aboriginal Relations and another of Indian and Inuit Services (Ibid.: 172). In discussing this restructuring, the report also makes a brief reference to an Aboriginal Parliament, with elected representatives, but one does not know why it was included for it seems to have no powers and is there only to advise the Canadian House of Commons and the Senate on legislative and constitutional matters pertaining to Aboriginal matters (Ibid.: 173).

### **Finance**

The burdensome question is how are these nations, territories and governments to be financed? The answer the commissioners gave to this question was predictable. It has long been obvious to Native Peoples in Canada that if they had access and control to the land resources (and all within—animals, forests and mineral rights) that were once theirs,<sup>8</sup> they would be able to generate their own resources. They view the treaties that the Federal Government made with them in the late 1800s as being trade-offs, their lands and resources for guarantees of a good living for them and their children—self-sufficiency, education, medical services and believe these should be reinterpreted in today's terms (Dickason 1992: 375). For example, what does the promise of a teacher being sent out in the 1870s mean for a 1990s society? It is not the right to one-room schoolhouses that today's Native Peoples see in this provision but, of course, to a full post-secondary education—university or professional training.

The British government recognized Indian title to the land they sought to settle, a policy they developed in the early 1600s when British



settlers first stepped on the lands of the Virginia, Massachusetts and New York Indian tribes. Initially, they purchased the land from the Indians. They did not pursue a policy of viewing the lands as unoccupied as they did elsewhere, perhaps because the first Native Peoples they encountered in the New World were farmers. Ever since, the British government has formally acknowledged (though not always in practice) that the Native Peoples possessed the land. This principle was transported into Canada and entrenched there in 1763, three years after Britain gained Canada from France in the Seven Years War. By the Royal Proclamation of 1763, King George III decreed that lands not ceded to or purchased by the Crown remained in the possession of the Indians and he further decreed that all the lands and territories not included within the limits of the then British colonies were reserved for the Indians under the Crown's sovereignty, protection and dominion (Magnet 1993: 922), a considerable land base. Although not always observed, nevertheless, the intent of the Royal Proclamation is well-recognized in Canadian Aboriginal Law and continues to form the *raison d'être* for modern land claims in Canada (Cumming and Mickenberg 1972: 28-29).

Canada partially fulfilled the requirements of the Royal Proclamation by signing a number of treaties with the Indians of the western prairie Provinces through a series of land cession treaties between the years 1870 and 1880 and thus opened land up to European settlement in the 1890s. Until 1975, the year of the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, at which time Quebec gained legal rights to about 375,000 sq km of northern Quebec, more than half the territory of Canada was still unceded Indian land. To this day, except for the Northwest Territories which have recently reached a settlement, much of this land continues to be unceded although negotiations with the Federal Government are on-going. Today, almost all of British Columbia, most of Quebec, except for the north, all of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland are still technically Indian lands (Coates 1992). Even where treaties existed or Indian Bands had settled in one area, there are still many outstanding claims on the grounds that land was illegally sold off or stolen. For example, drawing on my knowledge of Kahnawake, outside of Montreal, the initial land grant to the Mohawks in 1760 consisted of 40,000 acres.

Today Kahnawake has barely 12,000 acres that it can call its own (Morantz 1992: 105); suburbs of Montreal occupy the other 28,000 acres that were once part of Kahnawake. With such a land-dealing history as its legal and moral force, the commission recommended that the Federal and Provincial governments, through negotiation, provide Aboriginal Nations with 'lands sufficient in size and quality to foster Aboriginal economic self-reliance and cultural and political autonomy' (RCAP 1996, 5: 175). The extent of land is to be guided by the size of the territory the Aboriginal Nation once occupied, the nature of the resources, including water, current and projected economic needs of the population as well as their cultural needs, productivity of the land, and so on (Ibid.: 176). However, this land base is to be shared. Drawing on the land policy that was first applied in the James Bay case, the Commissioners call for this land to be divided into three categories, with two of them requiring shared responsibilities (Ibid.: 177).

Category 1 lands are those held exclusively by the Aboriginal Nations for which they would hold full legislative authority. The composition of these lands would be the existing reserves and settlements with additional land provided by the province. Category 2 lands would be the lands expanding the nation's holdings from their pool of traditional territories beyond what is necessary in Category 1 lands to assure economic self-reliance. Here the lands would be subject to shared legislative authority by the Aboriginal Nation and the Province.

Finally, Category 3 lands would be fully owned and controlled by the Provinces but subject to some residual rights to the Aboriginal Nation in respect of their access to historical and religious sites and cultural ceremonies and events (Ibid.: 178-79). Incidentally, this is not an original model of shared land holdings but was copied from that devised by and for the James Bay Crees in 1975 when they were fighting the development of a massive hydro-electric project on their lands.

In order to ensure a sufficient land base for Aboriginal Nations, the commission calls for an Indian Claims commission to negotiate this land transfer as well as calling on the Government to proclaim a new Royal Proclamation<sup>9</sup> that would enshrine these rights to the land.

Canada is rich in natural resources and it is to the resources on and in the land that the commission looks for economic development for the Aboriginal Nations. At the time of the treaties, 1870-1921, by which

various Indian tribes ceded their land rights to Canada, in exchange for promises of protection and help, resource extraction, such as minerals, was not a preoccupation of the Indians and sub-surface rights were not [always] demanded by them nor were other rights to resources included in the treaties. The commission therefore recommends that the Federal Government renegotiate with the Provinces for compensation funds, environmental controls, employment of Indians, and the like (Ibid.: 187-88). Even game and fur animals, as well as fishing rights, are subjects on which the commission calls for more controls by the Native Peoples, who lost these controls, despite promises in the treaties, when the Provinces began making Game Laws at the turn of the century. In matters of fishing, hunting and trapping the recommendations are granting quotas for Aboriginals before non-Aboriginal peoples or, perhaps, introducing specific hunting seasons of caribou, moose, deer and ducks for non-Aboriginal residents. In all cases, the commission advocates the co-management and co-jurisdiction of these resources, involving the Federal, Provincial and Aboriginal governments (Ibid.: 193). Since Native Peoples for long have worked as guides to tourists fishing and hunting, the commission also gives priority to Aboriginals over non-Aboriginals in licensing of outfitters (Ibid.: 191).

Again, the thrust of these recommendations is to enable the Aboriginal Nations to become self-sufficient, drawing on traditional sources of subsistence and income. The recommendations are geared more to working out how to achieve this economic development rather than justifying the restoration to the Aboriginal Nations of the control over local resources. The point is that the commission takes the stand that Aboriginal Nations should have their resources restored to them even if non-Indian fishermen in British Columbia or moose hunters in Quebec think otherwise. The justification stems from the 1763 Royal Proclamation which recognized that the land belonged to the Indians and by extension, the resources.

### **Cost**

In all the years that self-government has been discussed in the Canadian context, rarely has anyone dared to put a price tag on its cost. The Royal Commission had no choice; it could not avoid a discussion of the issue which it knew would lead to the popular condemnation of the report

itself. The Royal Commission calculates that it will take 20 years to implement its recommendations at a cost of \$ 50 billion or \$ 2.5 billion per annum. However, it also calculates the social costs that would result from not doing anything to change the existing conditions. It calculates the income that is lost to Aboriginal Peoples by their not being employed at \$ 5.8 billion in 1996 and the cost of remedial programmes in education, health, social welfare, all due to sub-standard living conditions, as \$ 1.7 billion, with these costs increasing each year if drastic measures are not taken to alter the status quo. These two social costs add up to \$ 7.5 billion for 1996. At the same time, the Federal Government, in delivering services to Aboriginal Peoples, budgeted in 1996 for \$ 6.2 billion. Thus it argues that it is much more costly to maintain the status quo than to implement its recommendations which would renew the vigour of the Aboriginal population (RCAP 1996,5: 24, 34-35).

### PROSPECTS OF POPULAR ACCEPTANCE

It is not apparent that the Canadian public will accept such far-reaching restructuring recommended in the report. Although there was sympathy expressed across the country for the plight of the Indians during the Oka crisis, today, when fiscal restraint is the budgetary refrain and Indians are being seen as provocateurs,<sup>10</sup> in a series of incidents that have been reported, it is unlikely that extraordinary measures will be accepted. Alan Blakeney, a former Provincial premier who served for a short while on the commission, believes that had the report come out several years earlier, on schedule, when 'sympathy for natives was still strong' (*The Globe and Mail* November 16, 1997), many of its recommendations could have been implemented.

The major proposals might have had a chance of being considered sympathetically by the public if the Federal Government had demonstrated some leadership in the release of the report. Under such a scenario, the Minister of Indian Affairs and other officials could have reminded the Canadian public of the disadvantaged conditions under which most Native Peoples in Canada live and could have called for a moral and financial commitment to end their second class citizenship. Instead, the instant the report was tabled, the media seized only on the

\$ 50 billion price tag and the fact that the Royal Commission, at a cost of over \$ 50 million, was the most expensive enquiry launched in Canada. Begun five years earlier, the Royal Commission report was completed in a year of extreme fiscal restraint, a year in which a Federal election was pending,<sup>11</sup> and no politicians on either side of the House of Commons would support it.

Given the tragic history the Native Peoples have endured in Canada, the adversity they face today—they are among the poorest of Canadians having the highest suicide rates, suffering the ravages of alcoholism, and enduring great loss in terms of their culture and language (Washburn 1996: 464-65)—the government ought to have taken the initiative in implementing some of the positive recommendations of the report soon after its release.<sup>12</sup> The then Minister of Indian Affairs, Ron Irwin, praised some of the recommendations of the report but dismissed as unrealistic its key recommendation—the expenditure to be incurred on the welfare of the Native Peoples. The prime minister of Canada, Jean Chretien, in the early 1970s had served as a much-liked Indian Affairs Minister, but even he was not sufficiently forthcoming about the report and was not even present at the ceremonies marking its release. As Chief Ovide Mercredi angrily commented, 'We might as well burn it [the Report] because it will not amount to anything' (*The Globe and Mail*, December 6, 1996).

The cost may be only one of the factors for the lukewarm response of the Federal Government to the bold initiatives proposed by the Royal Commission. It is also possible that the report may turn out to be irrelevant, though it is now too early to predict. There had been some discussion in the Canadian press, suggesting that during the five years while the commissioners were examining the problems of sub-standard living conditions, the Federal Department of Indian Affairs was, region by region, addressing some of the problems. In fact, the new chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine, in his capacity as chief of the organization of Manitoba Indians, had several years earlier, negotiated an arrangement with the Department of Indian Affairs to allow the Manitoba Bands Councils to run their own affairs, a kind of *de facto* municipal-style self-government, although without any constitutional guarantees. As well, the previous Minister of Indian Affairs seems to have favoured working with local chiefs and Bands rather than through

the national organization (*The Globe and Mail*, August 1, 1997) and this policy may have doomed the report even before it was released. Thus, the steps being taken to improve living conditions through such a piecemeal approach may have subverted the new, radical approach proposed in the report.

Other factors such as convictions that are deeply rooted in the Canadian psyche might stall or obstruct the implementation of a Third Order of government. They flow from the endless debates in Canadian history over the rightful place French Canadians and their Province of Quebec should have in Canadian society. The debate in the context of Indian societies, since 1969,<sup>13</sup> has focused on individual rights versus collective rights. This issue revolved around ending special constitutional supports for Indians, an issue that grew out of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's belief that all citizens, Indian, French and English, should enjoy the same rights. The common protection of individual rights would ensure equality for all (Weaver 1981).

The Indians have a different view, expressed by Ovide Mercredi who addressed Trudeau at a public gathering<sup>14</sup> in March, 1992. He told him that it was 'fine' for Trudeau to believe in individual rights because Trudeau belonged to the majority but how would cultural matters, such as language rights for communities of a few hundred, be thus ensured? Individual rights, Mercredi claimed, protect the majority, not the minorities.

This contested vision of Canada continues to be played out and most recently was the subject of a lively debate at the conference on the Royal Commission report between a conservative columnist, Andrew Coyne and Ovide Mercredi. Coyne contended that there could be no distinctions between citizens in a democracy; Mercredi maintained his position that these distinctions preserved minority rights (RCAP Conference, February 2, 1997).

It is a 'touchy' issue in Canada as the Province of Quebec insists on being considered a 'distinct society', with special rights while most of the western Provinces object to one province being so constitutionally protected. This is the stalemate to achieving political peace in Canada and Quebec. Although status Indians now are already governed by a different regime as compared to other Canadians, enshrining yet other 'rights' and creating parallel systems such as self-government or a

separate justice system, might create a backlash by the Canadians already quite fed-up with the long-standing debate over collective vs. individual rights.<sup>15</sup>

Yet another vision in the report of the Royal Commission will be difficult to implement: their constituting self-government along the lines of 50-60 nations. They intend that some 550 bands will coalesce into 56 nations. Will this happen? I have not gathered any scientific evidence but it has been my observation that large groupings, beyond the Band or village, seem not to be long-lasting in Indian society, at least for those people who had traditionally lived as hunters in small family groups of about 20 people (Morantz 1983: 91). It is possible that the succession of colonial governments destroyed a traditional consolidation of Bands in some regions of Canada. Nevertheless, very small communities are a reality today with 542 Bands amongst 438,000 people.

Even those societies who once functioned within Confederacies, as did the Six Nations of Iroquois, today, do not act in concert on any issue. There is not even an umbrella organization of, for example, the four Mohawk communities that live relatively close to each other in Quebec and Ontario. For example, both Kanasetake and Kahnawake were heavily involved in the Oka crisis, yet each village, annually on July 11, holds its own *pow-wow*<sup>16</sup> to mark the occasion. Or, the James Bay Crees set up centralized bureaucracies to handle the governing of health and education services in 1975 but, it is my observation, that the villages have asked for decentralization in these matters. Since the late 1980s, many of the services are now run at the community level (Alan Penn, personal communication, March 1997).

A further example was provided by some Innu<sup>17</sup> people who, in May 1997 at McGill University, held an information meeting to inform the public of a recent agreement regarding land ownership signed between a group of Innu communities in Quebec and the Federal Government. The negotiations have been on-going since 1979 and originally included 12 communities of Innu and the neighbouring Attikamek peoples. This particular agreement, the only one yet signed, involves only four of the original 12 communities; the other eight are still negotiating a totally separate agreement. Furthermore, nowhere in this document is there any reference to a nation and, in fact, the four Innu communities were each to remain more or less autonomous. The spokeswoman was asked about

the missing concept of nation to which she replied that nation is a Western concept; it does not conform to Innu practice of living in small family settlements on the land.

Therein lies my concern; although some of the Indian peoples traditionally were tribes or nations or confederacies, the majority of the 542 bands do not stem from such a tradition. It may not be impossible for them to restructure into nations. However, this would require a re-conceptualization of the egalitarian ethos that continues to dominate the thinking of many Native Peoples. The Royal Commission did not consider these underlying values or attitudes. They seemed to think it was only a matter of numbers and that sheer considerations of mobility would guide this transformation.

I would suggest that this consolidation into larger communities or nations will be difficult to achieve. Although the nations are envisaged as including culturally and linguistically similar peoples, their long-standing tradition of governance in small groups which was face-to-face, kinship-based and by consensus, will operate against the formation of larger, fabricated cultural entities or nations. As former individual family groupings, it is doubtful that about 7,000 or 8,000 people could create a collective consciousness, or a sense of a common territorial land base, so necessary to nation building, when none existed before. Similarly, Douglas Sanders, a leading authority on aboriginal law, commented that 'to those who know some reserve communities well, the idea of inducing all bands to join together in larger nations is at best a long term hope' (1997: 16).

There is a further conceptual impediment the commissioners have created which endangers the successful implementation of the recommendations in their report. According to their own studies, fully 42 per cent of the status Indian population live outside their reserves (RCAP 1996, 1: 16). However, their discussions of self-government, formulated in conjunction with their concept of nation, are in the context of a 'nation government' more so than a 'public government' and centre on reserve communities. Thus most of the recommendations and formulations are geared to the Reserve Indians, that is to only 58 per cent of the status Indian population. The report lacks a more detailed plan of action for the non-reserve Indians. This is most deplorable because at present the Federal Government tries not to be involved in the



plight of urban Indians; little is done to help them adjust to the urban setting. It is this very significant and sizeable group of Indians living away from their communities, that is most vulnerable culturally and is at risk of being assimilated. Yet, the recommendations for this important sector are far less creative or comprehensive. Of the five volumes, urban matters are taken up in only one of the seven sections of volume four (RCAP 1996: 4).

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, it is doubtful that the main findings of the Royal Commission will ever be implemented, doubtful on the grounds that no government is going to undertake the level of expenditures required to transform the relationship between Indian societies and Canada, nor would the Canadian people, I believe, entertain the entrenchment of such obvious ethnically based rights. Furthermore, the government seems to be engaged presently in developing its own strategy of helping communities to develop their economic and social institutions, individually and incrementally, more of a 'band-aid' approach, a somewhat improved status quo rather than a deliberate transformation as called for by the report. These are external obstacles but there is, I believe, a significant internal one in the expectation that small family-based communities will consolidate into nations, to go from encompassing the interests of 500 people to 18 or 24 times as many. It is asking Indian societies to reconstitute themselves both psychologically and physically. I suggest that the Royal Commission has fallen into the same trap that defeated the Canadian government's Indian policy for over 100 years—the belief that one policy will do for all.

### **NOTES**

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Center for Sami Studies, University of Tromsø, Tromsø, Norway in April, 1997. The author wishes to thank the faculty and students for their insightful comments. This paper has benefited from these discussions but I, alone, am responsible for the claims made therein.

1. The report of this commission forms the nucleus of this paper. I challenge the two underlying principles of this report: one is the importance it attaches to the formation of Aboriginal Nations and the other is on collective vs. individual rights as an organizing principle within Canadian society.

2. The present form of government is that of very small-scale societies governed by an elected chief and councillors according to the regulations set down in the Indian Act (1876) of the Federal Government of Canada. Thus, these Band councils are part of the national government's policies and are not sovereign. Many Band communities are only a few hundred people.
3. A number of terms are used variously in this paper to describe the same peoples, reflecting the variety of designations heard in Canada. In legal discussions, the term 'aboriginal peoples' is used but hardly ever in common parlance. Rather, 'Native peoples' is most often heard and it refers generally to all the indigenous peoples, Indian, Metis and Inuit, terms explained in the text below. This paper focuses primarily on status Indians and this term is found throughout, rather than Inuit and Metis. Indian here refers to the native population of Canada, who were, along with other groups like the Inuit, until 400 years ago, in complete possession of their land.
4. The list is as follows: history, health, education, aspirations for self-government and relations with Canadian government, their land claims, treaties, economies and cultures, living conditions in the north as well as in the cities; relationship with the justice system, state of their languages, spiritual well-being and their situation in Canada relative to non-Aboriginal Canadians (RCAP 1996, 5: 297).
5. Originally aboriginal rights were thought of as applying only to 'property rights' (see Cumming and Mickenberg 1972:3).
6. An example of the consequences of not differentiating between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in a Public Government model is found in a news story from Nunavik, Northern Quebec (*The Globe and Mail*, April, 9, 1997). This jurisdiction was set up under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975 and did not distinguish between rights for the Inuit and the non-Inuit. According to the article there are a number of men, non-Inuit, many non-Canadian citizens, such as Turks and Romanians, who married Inuit women, thereby becoming eligible for all the extra benefits—such as dental care, housing, free university, etc. Even if they leave the women and move away, as a number of them have done, they are still eligible for these benefits. The reason it is a news story is that Inuit leaders are claiming that a number of these men are 'milking it for all its worth' and are hence seeking to change the eligibility requirements.
7. A separate and distinct Department of Indian Affairs had its origin in the 1830s in the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, two of the Provinces making up the British Colony of Canada. The country of Canada only dates back to 1867. However, a limited administration for Indians developed in the late 1700s in the British War Department for many Indian men served as military allies to the British and were rewarded through a system of presents (Dickason 1992: 217-224). The Department of Northern Affairs, responsible for the Inuit in the far north, was established in 1953 (Canada 1954). It was merged with Indian Affairs in 1966 (Canada 1966) as the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.
8. Until the latter part of the 16th century, the land now known as Canada was occupied only by the ancestors of the Indians and Inuit. The French and English began making short trips, by sea, in the late 1500s to fish for cod. In the early 1600s, the French began settling on the east coast of Canada primarily to conduct a trade in beaver furs with the Indian inhabitants. The English conquered Canada in 1760 establishing a series of settlements, particularly after the American War of Independence when British loyalists came to settle in Canada. Eventually, in the late 1700s, the fur trade and settlements brought the English to the west coast. Thus, until 400 years ago, the Native Peoples, divided into many different culturally distinct societies, were in total possession of the land and its resources.

9. With regard to this new Proclamation, at the Conference on the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, held at McGill University in early February, 1997, some Indian commentators objected to initiating another such royal legislative implement, charging that it would be yet another 'colonial document'.
10. Since 1990, the media have focused on the trade Indians in Quebec and Ontario have been conducting in cigarettes they import from the U. S., bypassing the Canadian duties on cigarettes as well as Indian seizures and occupation of land in Ontario and British Columbia.
11. The Federal Election was held in early May 1997, six months after the report was released. The incumbent party, the Liberals, were re-elected with a greatly reduced majority. Neither the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples nor the general subject of aboriginal peoples was raised by any of the parties as a campaign issue.
12. Ovide Mercredi was Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, a national lobby group that brings together the chiefs of all 542 Bands. In August, 1997 Chief Ovide Mercredi lost the election to Chief Phil Fontaine (*The Globe and Mail*, August 1, 1997).
13. Prime Minister Trudeau and his Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chretien (now Prime Minister of Canada) issued a White Paper in 1969 calling for the abolition of the Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs on the grounds that this act and the department were highly discriminatory and instead called on the paramountcy of individual rights to guarantee equality among citizens (Dickason 1992:386-87).
14. The meeting was one of monthly series, on current affairs, sponsored by the journal *Cite Libre*. Chief Ovide Mercredi was the invited speaker.
15. On the other hand, one might also see the constitutional debates over Quebec as having produced, to some degree, a climate of greater tolerance to minority rights for Canadian Native Peoples than enjoyed in other countries. For instance, the Sami in Norway have been unable to convince the Norwegian government or people to provide special constitutional measures to protect their culture and language (Minde, personal communication, April 1997).
16. A *pow-wow* was an early 20th century cultural innovation begun on the Plains in the United States, spreading to the Prairie Indians in Canada. The *pow-wow* developed as a secular activity, acceptable to Euro-Americans, under which a number of Indian groups could come together. It became a pan-Indian movement that spread throughout North America (Hoxie 1996:211). The reason Indians had to create a secular gathering is that both American and Canadian governments, at the end of the 19th century, reacted 'nervously' to new religions, messianic or revitalization movements that arose in the mid-West as a response to the encroachment of settlers and government (Ibid: 205).
17. The Innu, formerly called the Montagnais by the French who first encountered them in the 17th century, have as their ancestral lands the territory extending north from the St. Lawrence River in Quebec. The Innu were first visited by French-speaking Catholic priests and today use French, in addition to their Montagnais language, similar to that spoken by the Crees of James Bay.

## REFERENCES

- Alfred, Gerald R. 1995. *Heeding the Voices of our Ancestors. Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Canada, Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources. 1954. *Annual Report*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer

- Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. 1966. *Annual Report*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer.
- Coates, Ken (ed.). 1983. 'Aboriginal Land Claims in Quebec' in Ibid. (ed.), *Aboriginal Land claims in Canada: A Regional Perspective*, pp. 101-130. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman.
- . 1992. 'Introduction' in K. Coates, (ed.), *Aboriginal Land Claims in Canada. A Regional Perspective*, pp. 1-10. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman.
- Cumming, Peter A. and Neil H. Mickenberg (eds.). 1972. *Native Rights in Canada*. Toronto: General Publishing.
- De Vall, Connie. 1995. 'Equality—Indian Women and Self Government in Canada', in Terje Brantenberg, Henry Minde and Jane Hansen (eds). *Becoming Visible: Indigenous Politics and Self-Government*, pp. 165-169. Proceedings of the Conference on Indigenous Politics and Self-Government. Tromso, Norway: University of Tromso, November 8-10, 1993.
- Dickason, Olive. 1992. *Canada's First Nations. A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*. Toronto: McClelland Stewart Grand Council of the Crees 1995 Sovereign Injustice. Forcible Inclusion of the James Bay Crees and Cree Territory into a Sovereign Quebec. Nemaska, Quebec: Grand Council of the Crees.
- Hoxie, Fred. 1996. 'The Reservation Period, 1880-1960', in B. G. Trigger and W. E. Washburn (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, Vol. I. pp. 183-258. North America. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Magnet, Joseph. 1993. *Constitutional Law of Canada. Cases, Notes and Materials*. Cowansville (Queen): Les Editions.
- Miller, Yvon Blais, J. R. 1992 'The Oka Controversy and the Federal Land Claims Process' in K. Coates (ed.). *Aboriginal Land Claims in Canada. A Regional Perspective*, pp. 215-242. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman.
- Morantz, Toby. 1983. *An Ethnohistoric Study of Eastern James Bay Cree Social Organization, 1700-1850*. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada.
- Polcies, Cindy. 1995. 'Aboriginal Self-Government in Canada: The Native Women's View' in Terje Brantenberg, Henry Minde and Jane Hansen (eds). *Becoming Visible: Indigenous Politics and Self-Government*, pp. 159-164. Proceedings of the Conference on Indigenous Politics and Self-Government. Tromso, Norway: University of Tromso, November 8-10, 1993.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). 1996. *London: Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services.
- Sanders, Douglas. 1997. 'The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Seeking Coherence in Canadian Aboriginal Policy.' Paper presented to the Sami Studies Institute, Tromso, April 6.
- Washburn, Wilcomb E. 1996. 'The Native American Renaissance, 1960-1995', in B. G. Trigger and W. E. Washburn (eds.). *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, pp. 401-73. Volume 1. North America. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Weaver, Sally. 1981. *Making Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda, 1968-70*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

# **ECOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA: A FIELD AND ITS FUTURE**

**Amita Baviskar**

This paper attempts to delineate the growth of the field of 'environmental sociology' in India, with a special focus on its relationship with development sociology. I shall review the major developments in the field and shall critically evaluate their theoretical and practical achievements. In conclusion, I shall draw attention to neglected areas and issues which, in my opinion, merit further research.

## **THE INTELLECTUAL GENEALOGY**

Compared to economics or political science, sociology is a young discipline. Within sociology, the study of ecology and development is younger still. An indication of its recent origin is the fact that there is no consensus on a title for the range of research in this area; it has been variously referred to as 'ecological anthropology', 'social ecology', and 'environmental sociology'. Ramachandra Guha (1994), a social historian who must be credited with firmly establishing and fostering this field in India, chooses to follow an illustrious sociologist, Radhakamal Mukerjee, in calling the field 'social ecology'.

In the 1920s, Radhakamal Mukerjee proposed the 'region' as a concept that would allow a synthesis of ecology and sociology. Any human group, wrote Mukerjee, must be considered in relation 'not merely to temperature, humidity, sunshine, altitude, etc, but also to their indirect effects, the interwoven chain of biotic communities to which it is inextricably linked, the plants that it cultivates, the animals it breeds and even the insects which are indigenous to the region'. 'The region', he also wrote, 'is at once an ecological aggregation of persons, an

---

Amita Baviskar is on the faculty of the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007

---

economic framework and a cultural order' (quoted in Guha 1992: 62). From the region, Mukerjee went on to flesh out a theory of 'social ecology' (Mukerjee 1942) which he subsequently tested through empirical studies such as those of the Indo-Gangetic Plain and of agricultural productivity in the princely state of Gwalior.

The theory of 'social ecology', like its forebear 'human ecology', is modelled on the discipline of 'ecology' in the natural sciences. Concepts such as community, niche, interconnectedness through the 'webs of life', the notion of equilibrium and so on, are borrowed from ecology proper. The only difference between ecology and 'social ecology' is that the latter systematically includes the human species within its ambit. While a reminder of the 'web of life' is an important corrective for the social sciences which generally underplay the significance of biotic factors, the social sciences, I would argue, cannot be modelled on ecology. The human species, unlike the species with which ecology deals, has enormous powers for transforming landscapes, powers that are unique to it. In addition, ecology rests fundamentally on the idea that biological systems tend towards homeostasis which does not hold in the case of societies. The concept of an organic 'community' in ecology is also quite different from a sociological understanding of 'communities' as socially stratified. That is, the crucial element of social thought and action cannot be accommodated within a 'social ecology' modelled on the natural sciences. Instead of incorporating the 'social' into ecology, I prefer the injection of the 'environmental' into sociology. 'Environmental sociology' allows us to retain the disciplinary orientation of the social sciences, and focus on social relations and processes as they affect and are, in turn, affected by the biophysical world in which social beings live.

While Radhakamal Mukerjee was the first Indian scholar to highlight the links between the social and the biophysical worlds, his footprints on the sands of Indian sociology are rather faint. It is inexplicable that the considerable opus that was Mukerjee's work over a lifetime is today rarely mentioned by environmental sociologists. So is the case with a man whom Mukerjee greatly admired—Patrick Geddes, the remarkable urban planner who brought ecological sensitivities to bear on the development of towns such as Indore, Lucknow, Patiala, Dacca, and who was a Professor of Sociology and Civics at Bombay University in

the 1920s.<sup>1</sup> In his essay on the 'Prehistory of Indian Environmentalism', Guha (1992) highlights the largely forgotten work of Mukerjee, Geddes, Verrier Elwin and J. C. Kumarappa.

While Kumarappa, the Gandhian economist who developed the blueprint for an ecologically sustainable village-centred economic order, was sidelined by the prevailing hegemonic ideal of a centralized and resource-intensive path of development, history has been a little kinder to Verrier Elwin. Elwin's work on the Baiga (1939), with its poignant account of a community torn from its moorings by the colonial ban on shifting cultivation, and on the Agaria (1942), a tribe of charcoal iron makers, are classics which are still read and which have influenced the sensibilities of a number of sociologists of tribal communities (see Sundar 1997). In his ethnographic writing as well as his later policy-oriented work on the north-east, Elwin dwelt on the cultural symbiosis between tribal communities and forests—a symbiosis which had to be recognized and respected by scholars and administrators.<sup>2</sup>

In their own ways, these scholars shared an understanding of the links between environment and development, for all of them were actively involved in the enterprise of social and economic reconstruction for an independent India. The optimism of those times is reflected in their work:

Kumarappa could be hopeful that a free India would restore the social and natural integrity of the village (something colonial rule had gravely undermined); Geddes that Indian urbanization would build upon longstanding architectural and town planning traditions while being in harmony with the countryside; Elwin that the forest world and the life world of the tribals would be once again united; and Mukerjee that social theory and planning would benefit alike from a fundamentally biophysical and ecological approach (Guha 1992: 62-3).

According to Guha, the first decades after independence were an age of 'ecological innocence', a circumstance that helps explain why environmentally-oriented thinking found such little resonance in intellectual and political life. We had to wait till the 1970s for a systematic development of environmental sociology.

## THE REBIRTH OF ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

The revival of interest in environmental sociology in the 1970s is due to the emergence of environmental movements which brought issues of environment and development on the public agenda. It is ironic, in retrospect, that in India ecological concerns emerged in opposition to development priorities.

In the earliest debates which were perceived to be on 'environmental' issues as, for example, Chipko and the Silent Valley, there was a sharp division between those who supported 'development' over 'environment' and those who argued for 'environment' over 'development'. The 'development' camp was committed to the cause of accelerating economic growth through industrialization for increasing human welfare, while the 'environment' camp was concerned with the preservation of unique ecosystems and endangered species, as well as with the maintenance of an overall ecological balance. Environmentalists were accused of forcing their elitist fads on a poor nation whose foremost priority should be to meet its citizens' basic needs. India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi articulated this belief at the 1972 Stockholm Conference when she said that 'poverty was the worst polluter'.

It was asserted that, in the Indian context, environmental concerns were a luxury imported from the West and that environmentalists were 'anti-development'. In this highly-charged debate the pro-development group had gained much moral superiority by demonstrating its concern for human welfare, while environmentalists were projected as an affluent, pampered and naive minority, out of touch with the harsh realities of poverty.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, this accusation was partly valid. One section among the environmentalists consisted of wildlife conservationists—amateurs (many of them old *shikaris*-turned-photographers from the former princely states) as well as members of the scientific establishment—who had privileged access to Indira Gandhi. This group of environmentalists successfully brought pressure on the government to create a network of national parks and sanctuaries all over India to protect endangered wildlife, overlooking the subsistence claims of the local residents. The Silent Valley power project promoted by the Government of



Kerala—which was given up by the Centre because it threatened tropical rainforests—was an instance of the success of elitist environmentalism.

To distance themselves from elitist environmentalism other environmentalists kept away from wildlife conservation. Most notable among these was the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), which mobilized many activists (whom I would, in retrospect, call Ecological Marxists) to prepare the *State of India's Environment: Citizen's Reports* which articulated a very different ideology (CSE 1982, 1984). They challenged the very terms of the debate by arguing that development versus environment, was a false dichotomy.

Ecological Marxists asserted that India's development policies had failed because they had not fundamentally changed the patterns of control over the means of production. The concentration of the means of production in the hands of the state bureaucracy, the industrial elite and the rich peasants had skewed technological choices, production decisions and income distribution. The interests and priorities of these dominant classes created a mindset which saw industrialization and urbanization as the only path to development. The impoverishment of the working class and the impoverishment of the environment were seen to be inter-related. Ecological crises grew out of the inequities of control over, not only industry and land, but also other productive resources such as water, forests and pastures. A model of development based on uncontrolled industrialization was bound to fail because it destroyed both the natural resource base on which material prosperity is founded, as well as sources of livelihood of the poor. Such a model only served the short-term interests of the rich.

Environmentalists accompanied their critique of ongoing development with the proposal of an alternative concept—'sustainable development'. An economy based on sustainable development, it was argued, would harvest natural resources to meet basic developmental needs in a way that would allow a continuous stream of ecological benefits in the future (WCED 1987). The interests of social justice would determine development priorities. In this way, the Ecological Marxists among the environmentalists showed that, instead of being antithetical, development and environment concerns mutually reinforced each other. The spread of the concept of 'sustainable development' transformed 'ecology' from the monopoly of the physical and biological

sciences into a subject to which the social sciences could also contribute. This change became possible due to the successful efforts of social activists who demonstrated that questions about natural resource use and abuse were fundamentally linked to issues of social inequality and power, where class and gender relations, the state and other social institutions, technologies and cosmologies played a central part.

Both environmental sociology and development sociology share a common orientation in that they emerged as responses to a sense of wrong. In the case of development sociology, the problems of newly-independent nations preoccupied the minds of planners, both economists and sociologists, leading to a focus on what was wrong and what needed to be done. In this problem-solving approach lay the beginnings of development sociology, where the central concern was: how can a new nation, impoverished by colonial rule and mired in tradition, achieve its ambition of modernization, industrialization and urbanization? So also with environmental sociology. Interest in the subject grew as the notion of environmental crisis imprinted itself more and more widely and deeply in popular consciousness. Again, a sense of what was wrong and what needed to be done drove the discipline in a certain direction. Thus, we find in development sociology as well as environmental sociology, a focus on grounded analysis rather than on theoretical abstraction, on prescription rather than on interpretation.

The strong normative urge in environmental sociology, I would speculate, is propelled by two factors. The first, already mentioned above, is the popular<sup>4</sup> perception of environmental crisis. This perception has been greatly influenced by western discussions in the 1970s on population explosion and on the limits to growth (Meadows et al. 1972), and in the 1980s on the destruction of tropical rainforests. Since perceptions of crises tend to run to apocalyptic visions and dramatic moments, environmental sociology too has focused on acute rather than chronic problems. For instance, there have been numerous studies of the social and ecological consequences of displacement due to dams and other development projects, yet very few have tried to locate these projects as part of a wider, more gradual, historical process of change. While the urgent nature of a crisis certainly demands our attention, we should not simply fall for the temptation of catering to the public demand with journalistic coverage.

The second factor which has led environmental sociology to a preoccupation with prescription has been the role of international aid organizations, from the World Bank to bilateral donor agencies. The funding priorities of these organizations have closely followed international trends in liberal development sociology. Thus, from the 1970s, there was an overriding focus on women<sup>5</sup> (which, combined with concerns about population growth, led to programmes for family planning and maternal health); from the 1980s (mirroring the concern about deforestation) there was an added emphasis on social forestry followed by community wastelands development; and in the 1990s we see a preoccupation with state-local community partnerships in the form of joint forest management (JFM). With the financial resources at their command, international aid organizations have greatly influenced the direction of research. Thus we find a fairly well-developed literature on wastelands development (Singh and Burra 1993; INTACH 1989; Chambers et al. 1989), and now on JFM (see SPWD and Ford Foundation publications; Poffenberger and McGean 1996), areas where aid agencies have intervened significantly. Besides giving environmental sociology a general orientation towards policy prescriptions, the priorities and perspectives of funding agencies have also shaped the manner in which various sociological concepts have been constructed. I shall discuss this problem subsequently.

### **THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY**

If the field of development sociology concerns itself with studying processes of economic change in their social context, we would expect that environmental sociology in India would contribute to our understanding of the ecological dimensions of the transition from a system based on state-led public investment to a liberalized economy. However, there are virtually no detailed studies of the relationship between the environment and national economic development. Consider, for instance, the case of the Green Revolution, a key intervention in the agricultural sector. Even three decades later, there is no study that examines the combined effects of ecological and social transformations wrought by the Green Revolution.<sup>6</sup> The pioneering work of Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha (1992, 1995) in describing the broad

ecological impacts of economic development in independent India is an exception, but neither of them is a sociologist in the formal sense: Gadgil is an ecological scientist while Guha is a historian. In fact, Indian historians are far ahead of their sociologist colleagues in studying environmental change; the impact of the colonial state on customary forest, pasture and water management practices has been discussed practically threadbare<sup>7</sup> (Arnold and Guha 1995; Chakravarty-Kaul 1996; Guha 1989a; Rangarajan 1996).

To the ecologist Madhav Gadgil and the anthropologist K. C. Malhotra must go the credit for attempting an ecological analysis of the iron framework of India's social structure—the caste system. In a novel but controversial essay, these scholars have described the caste system as a set of trophic levels in which different castes occupy ecological niches marked by division of labour and resource partitioning (1994). They propose that the caste system has endured over centuries because of its ecological stability brought about by limiting inter-caste competition over natural resources. While their account of the niche diversification practised by pastoralists and nomads is quite persuasive, it would be a mistake to extend the analysis to the caste system as a whole. The study of a few *jatis* in close proximity within the caste hierarchy (the Kunbis and the Gavlis, or the Tirumal Nandiwalas, Vaidu and Phase-Pardhis) may show instances of amicable resource-partitioning, but the study of the caste system as a whole has to account for the profound inequalities which enable upper castes to deny resources to those below them. Gadgil and Malhotra's account is dubious because of its strong functionalism, and has been attacked for seeming to justify the caste system. This essay, along with the work of Vandana Shiva and others, has also been criticized for mythologizing India's past as an ecological golden age and constructing a 'new traditionalist discourse' (Sinha et al.: 1997).

Development sociology in India has, by and large, tended to concentrate on processes internal to the nation-state. Unlike Latin American researchers, for instance, Indian sociologists have generally not conceived of development as a global process of resource extraction and transfer. The relationship between nation-states and global circuits of capital has not received much attention in India. In the case of environmental sociology, too, international processes and discourses have not been examined in much detail by Indian scholars, even though

post-colonial Western discourses on population explosion, deforestation, protection of 'wilderness', genetic diversity and intellectual property rights, cultural rights of 'indigenous people' and so on have been enormously influential in shaping Indian debates.

While the spread of industrialization and urbanization in the West generated an extensive literature on the transformation of the fundamental ecological categories of time and space, of changes in the nature of work and leisure, public and private spheres, such a cultural ecology has been absent from India.<sup>8</sup> Most studies of urban sociology have followed the city-as-social-text perspective (cf. Oldenburg on Lucknow), focusing on the spatial metaphors in which religious, colonial and communal concepts express themselves. There has been a simultaneous neglect of the political economy of lived environments (cf. Castells for Brazil), the contestations over urban space, amenities and common property resources which are central to processes of urban transformation.

While environmental sociologists in India have largely ignored the macro-framework of development in the form of industrialization and urbanization, they have produced numerous micro-studies on impacts of development projects, especially the displacement of human populations. As mentioned earlier, the impetus for this came, in part, from aid organizations, but a larger share of the credit for drawing sociologists' attention to these projects must surely go to various social movements, Chipko and Narmada Bachao Andolan being prime examples. Popular resistance against projects such as Sardar Sarovar dam, aquaculture in lake Chilika, a firing range in Netarhat, and so on, received extensive media coverage and academic interest was quick to follow. Social conflict over the privatization or 'statization' of rural common property resources—especially forests and fisheries—also drew sociologists' attention to the study of changing patterns of their ownership, control and use. It is interesting to note that, when studying impacts of development projects, environmental sociology has devoted what is perhaps a disproportionate amount of attention to the plight of forest-dwellers, especially adivasis (Baviskar 1995). Dalits, landless labourers, and other socially oppressed groups have not figured prominently as the subject of environmental sociology. I shall examine the possible reasons for this in the following section.

The articulation of environmentalist ideologies by social movements was also influential in spurring sociologists to discuss not only the inequitable effects of development projects, but also to launch a wider critique of the development paradigm, denouncing the values upon which it was based. In a discourse which laid claim to a Gandhian heritage, scholars such as Vandana Shiva (1988), Ashis Nandy (1987) and Shiv Vishvanathan (1990), attacked the ideology of domination over nature (and women) that underlay Western science and technology. Thus a critique of modernity has been a powerful current within environmental sociology.

With environmental movements setting the agenda for environmental sociology, it is perhaps unsurprising that there has been little critical examination of the movements themselves. Important issues such as the articulation of the movement ideology; mobilization of disparate social groups under the umbrella of 'environment'; gender, class and tribal divisions within these movements and the relationship between activists and the support of the movements have received little attention and sociologists have satisfied themselves by repeating the party line. Attempts to unravel the packaging of struggles as 'environmental' have just begun. Gail Omvedt is one of the few scholars who has written extensively on this subject (Omvedt 1993). My own work (1995) discusses how the Narmada Bachao Andolan transcends the differences between hill adivasis and caste Hindus of the plains in the Narmada valley to construct a unified environmental discourse. I have subsequently examined the relationship between middle-class non-tribal political activists and adivasi leaders in framing tribal politics in Madhya Pradesh (Baviskar 1997a and 1997b).

### THEORETICAL PROBLEMS

For a variety of reasons mentioned above, environmental sociology has been somewhat uncritical in its acceptance of certain key analytical concepts. I shall limit my discussion here to a cluster of these concepts, viz., 'community', 'tradition', 'rural' and 'tribe'.<sup>9</sup> Influenced by the liberal perspective of aid agencies, environmental sociologists have employed the notion of the village community in a way that ignores its power dynamics and its changing character. Gender, caste and class

relations of conflict within the village as well as the relationships of production, exchange and consumption that different groups within the village have with the rest of the world tend to be obscured. What we get, instead, is a neo-Chayanovian ideal of the united, unchanging peasant community. If there is any discussion of social change at all, it is usually unilateral—villagers enter only as the victims of development. Only the rare study attributes agency and dynamism to villagers. And if it does so, collective action is shown as a mysterious, spontaneous phenomenon, with little attention to the mobilization of resources and the transformation of consciousness.

The ideal of a self-sufficient peasant community underlies much policy intervention on the part of aid agencies. Environmental sociologists, too, tend to fall prey to the celebration of a romanticized rurality. In this scenario, migration from rural areas is always treated as a problem, as a failure of the rural environment to sustain livelihoods. Policy interventions therefore focus on strengthening livelihoods from the land and other natural resources, so that people are not 'forced' to migrate. Yet the limited evidence available suggests that migration occurs due to both pull as well as push factors, due to the lure of cash incomes, urban lifestyles as well as rural impoverishment. However, migration and urbanization have been largely ignored in the field of environmental sociology, or treated as social 'problems' to be redressed.

Another related blind spot in environmental sociology is the treatment of 'tradition' and the apotheosis of groups such as adivasis and women as being 'closer to nature' and as bearers of traditional forms of knowledge, ecological wisdom and so on. Among scholars, Vandana Shiva is particularly prone to such essentialist representations. The search for alternatives to the demolished Western paradigm of development has led researchers to innovatively (and freely) interpret Hindu religious texts in order to excavate ancient Eastern ecological traditions (see also Vatsyayan 1992; Banwari 1992).<sup>10</sup> In their uncritical acceptance of 'tradition' and in their implicit belief in a golden age before colonialism when Eastern wisdom and a religiously-founded conservationist ethic held sway, some environmental sociologists tend to subscribe to a position that comes perilously close to an inverted Orientalism (Guha 1989b). Environmental sociology will mature as a field only when it is able to use dichotomies like 'tradition' and

'modernity' not in black and white terms, but as complex and dynamic analytical constructs.

To some extent, environmental sociologists have followed social activists and aid administrators in taking concepts such as 'community', 'tradition' and 'rurality' for granted because they have been either unable or unwilling to distance themselves from an activist-interventionist agenda. In a field as politically charged as environmental conflict, it is perhaps unrealistic to expect that sociologists will play a role that is distinct from that of the activist, the state, the donor, or the NGO. Yet environmentalism is no substitute for environmental sociology. Sociologists must be careful to locate environmentalism as an ideological construction that takes on a variety of forms. However difficult it may be, it is necessary that we struggle to reconcile the urge to champion causes with the belief that we are accountable to a wider community which will appreciate independent inquiry.

### CONCLUSION

Environmental sociology, though young, is not a marginal specialization. It holds the potential of altering the way we understand all social phenomena. A sensitivity to ecological factors does not limit us to a fragmented treatment of forests, water or pastures, but compels us to explore the continuities in natural resource use practices as experienced and acted upon by people both urban and rural, women and men, adivasi and caste Hindu. Environmental sociology should study how ecological factors shape material practices and ideas even as people shape the environment around them. This approach is immense in scope; it is relevant to the entire field of sociology.

### NOTES

Comments from Andre Beteille and M. N. Panini are gratefully acknowledged. The author is responsible for the shortcomings that remain. This paper was originally written as a theme paper on 'Ecology and Development' for the XIII All India Sociological Conference at Kolhapur in November 1996.

1. There has been a recent innovative attempt to use Patrick Geddes' writings in preparing an alternative master plan for Delhi (Dunu Roy: personal communication). Large sections of Delhi's population are threatened by displacement due to Supreme Court directives about the relocation of industries



which violate the zoning specifications of Delhi's Master Plan, and about the removal of unauthorized colonies. In response, the Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, a federation of trade unions and human rights organizations, has, among other actions, initiated a participatory survey of resource use in selected *bastis* of industrial workers. Translations of the master plan are being circulated along with excerpts from Geddes' writing, in order to introduce people to two alternative modes of urban planning. Informed by this literature, and equipped with data from the survey, the Manch hopes to enable workers to prepare an alternative master plan for the city which reflects their priorities.

2. Elwin's fierce exchanges with G. S. Ghurye on this issue are well-known (for a summary, see Baviskar 1997c: 104-107).
3. This tendency can be seen even today, when political proponents of development projects dismiss all environmental concerns on these grounds.
4. The use of the word 'popular' is somewhat misleading. I should clarify that the notion of ecological crisis exists at two levels: one, among the intelligentsia (disseminated by school education, the press and the electronic media) and, two as experienced in the lives of the rural poor as a crisis in access to fuel, fodder, or other aspects of livelihood. Large numbers of people, who do not belong to these two sections, do not subscribe to this notion.
5. The subject of 'WED'—women, environment and development, has now burgeoned into 'a field of its own'. Indian debates in the West. Thus, in Vandana Shiva (1988), we have a representative of the essentialist position that asserts a biological closeness between women and nature. Shiva's paradigm conflates patriarchy, Judeo-Christianity, capitalism and technological domination over nature. A much more compelling and reasoned analysis is found in Bina Agarwal's work (1992), which treats the women and environment link as the product of particular social structures. Rao (1991) offers a review of this literature.
6. I exclude Vandana Shiva's *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (1989) as a work more polemical than scholarly, which uses data in a highly selective manner.
7. However, pre-colonial and non-colonial states have remained largely uncharted territory.
8. A notable exception to this rule is Kumar (1988).
9. I have discussed elsewhere in somewhat arbitrary use of the concept 'environmental' in classifying areas of study (Baviskar 1995: 40-41).
10. Compare these with the carefully nuanced and historically sensitive interpretation of Dove (1994).

## REFERENCES

- Agarwal, Bina. 1992. 'The Gender and Environment Debate: Lessons from India', *Feminist Studies*, 18 (1): 119-158.
- Arnold, David and Ramachandra Guha. 1995. *Nature, Culture, Imperialism: Essays on the Environmental History of South Asia*. Delhi. Oxford University Press.
- Banwari. 1992. *Pancavati: Indian Approach to Environment*. (transl. from Hindi by Asha Vohra) Delhi. Shri Vinayak Publications.
- Baviskar, Amita. 1995. *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley*. Delhi Oxford University Press.
- . 1997a. 'Who Speaks for the Victims?' *Seminar*, 451: 59-61. Issue on Democracy and Development.
- . 1997b. 'Tribal Politics and Discourses of Environmentalism', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 31 (in press).

- . 1997c. 'Displacement and the Bhilala Tribals of the Narmada Valley', in Jean Dreze, M. Samson and S. Singh (eds). *The Dam and the Nation: Displacement and Resettlement in the Narmada Valley*, pp. 103-135. Delhi Oxford University Press: Delhi.
- Chambers, Robert, N. C. Saxena and Tushaar Shah. 1989. *To the Hands of the Poor: Water and Trees*. London Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Chakravarty-Kaul, Minoti. 1996. *Common Lands and Customary Law: Institutional Change in North India Over the Past Two Centuries*. Delhi Oxford University Press.
- . 1982. *The State of India's Environment: A Citizen's Report*. New Delhi: CSE.
- CSE (Centre for Science and Environment). 1985. *The State of India's Environment: The Second Citizen's Report*. New Delhi: CSE.
- Dove, Michael. 1994. "'Jungle" in Nature and Culture', in Ramachandra Guha (ed.). *Social Ecology*, pp. 90-111. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Elwin, Verrier. 1939. *The Baiga*, London: John Murray.
- . 1942. *The Agaria*, Calcutta: Oxford University Press.
- Gadgil, Madhav and Ramachandra Guha. 1992. *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- . 1995. *Ecology and Equity: The Use and Abuse of Nature in Contemporary India*. Delhi: Penguin.
- Gadgil, Madhav and K. C. Malhotra. 1994 'The Ecological Significance of Caste', in Ramachandra Guha (ed.). *Social Ecology*, pp. 27-41. Oxford University Press: Delhi.
- Guha, Ramachandra. 1989a. *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- . 1989b. 'Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique', *Environmental Ethics*, 11 (1): 71-83.
- . 1992. 'Prehistory of Indian Environmentalism: Intellectual Traditions' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27 (1&2): 57-64.
- . (ed.). 1994. *Social Ecology*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage). 1989. *Deforestation, Drought and Desertification: Perceptions on a Growing Ecological Crisis*. New Delhi: INTACH.
- Kumar, Nita. 1988. *The Artisans of Banaras: Popular Culture and Identity, 1880-1986*. Orient Longman: New Delhi.
- Meadows, D. , J. Randers, and W. W. Behrens. 1972. *The Limits to Growth*. Universe Books: New York.
- Mukerjee, Radhakamal. 1942. *Social Ecology*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.
- Nandy, Ashis. 1987. *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Nandy, Ashis, and Shiv Vishvanathan. 1990. in F. Marglin and S. Marglin (eds). *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture and Resistance*. pp. 145-184, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Omvedt, Gail. 1993. *Reinventing Revolution*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.
- Poffenberger, Mark and Betsy McGean (eds). 1996. *Village Voices, Forest Choices: Joint Forest Management in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Rangarajan, Mahesh. 1996. *Fencing the Forest: Conservation and Ecological Change in India's Central Provinces 1860-1914*. Oxford University Press: Delhi.
- Rao, Brinda. 1991. 'Dominant Constructions of Women and Nature in Social Science Literature'. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*. Pamphlet 2. Santa Cruz: University of California.

- Shiva, Vandana. 1988. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India*. New Delhi: Kali for Women.
- . 1989. *The Violence of the Green Revolution: Ecological Degradation and Political Conflict in Punjab*. Privately published.
- Singh, Andrea M. and Neera Burra. 1993. *Women and Wasteland Development in India*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Sinha, Subir, Shubhra Gururani and Brian Greenberg. 1997. 'The "New Traditionalist" Discourse of Indian Environmentalism', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 24(3): 65-99.
- Sundar, Nandini. 1997. *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar 1854-1996*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Vatsyayan, Kapila. 1992. 'Ecology and Indian Myth' in Geeti Sen (ed). *Indigenous Vision: Peoples of India, Attitudes to the Environment* pp. New Delhi: Sage.
- World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). 1987. *Our Common Future*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

# **PARKS, PEOPLE AND PROTEST: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION GROUPS**

**Ranjit Dwivedi**

## **THE CONTEXT: PROTECTED AREAS AND THE CRITICAL DISCOURSE**

Since the early 1970s, there has been a steady rise in the number and size of protected areas in developing countries, notably national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. In India, there are now about 520 protected areas (PAs), compared to 130 in 1975, spread over 148,700 sq km. An estimated 3 million people live inside these PAs.<sup>1</sup> Although in some protected areas limited human interventions are allowed, people living in and around these areas face a systematic restriction of access rights and usufruct which in turn affects their entitlement portfolio. Further, people are frequently displaced from their original settlements, with or without adequate compensation, to make way for the PAs. Such actions are justified by the official conservation discourse, which regards local communities as the principal threat to forests and wildlife. The major preoccupation of forest authorities has been to limit human interference. This attitude has generated stiff resistance from the affected people. Thus protected areas become arenas of resource struggles.

To accommodate the subsistence and natural resource requirements of the local people the Government of India and aid agencies have devised a number of measures. The creation of buffer zones in the 1970s, as part of the UNESCO's 'Man and Biosphere Programme' between strictly preserved areas and human settlements, was one such step.<sup>2</sup> Such programmes, too have been biased towards conservation objectives. Attempts to promote agricultural and rural development programmes alongside conservation measures have yielded poor results because of

---

Ranjit Dwivedi is a research scholar at the Institute of Social Studies, PH 373, P.O. Box 2976, 2502 LT, The Hague, The Netherlands.

their largely experimental character, designed principally to reduce conflicts at the local level, rather than to generate sustainable livelihood opportunities and alternatives.

Their policy of conservation has enjoyed support from a sizeable number of environmentalists located in urban areas. They believe that without state intervention, deforestation and wildlife depletion would be accelerated, given the pressures on forests from local communities on the one hand, and from industrial, commercial and developmental projects on the other. Sustained lobbying by this group has influenced stringent legislation such as the Wild Life Protection Act (1972 and 1991), the Forest Conservation Act (1980) and the Environment Protection Act (1986).

In recent years, however, with the intensification of resource conflicts around protected areas, a new discourse of conservation has gained ground. It is highly critical of the government and the environmentalists who support the government. The government's strategies have been seriously questioned, for their top-down, non-participatory character and the urban environmentalists have been dubbed elitist for their failure to take cognizance of the social roots of environmental use and abuse. This critical discourse has largely bred on local level struggles over access and use of resources and on the mediation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which are actively involved in such peoples struggles for forest resources and environmental protection. This is a recent trend in conservation movements; it accords importance to grassroots activism and demands that attention to be given to human rights along with animal rights.

### **Objectives and Method**

The focus in this paper is on a collective action programme—a campaign march called *yatra*, traversing through several national parks and sanctuaries in central and western India. Organized by a conglomerate of NGOs, conservation groups, grassroots organizations and environmentalists, the aim of the march was a critical assessment of official conservation policies and practices. It also attempted to initiate a dialogue among a wide range of actors affected by and associated with conservation to facilitate the participation of local people in evolving new strategies of conservation. A major part of this study is based on the

participation in the campaign march. This technique of participatory research involved participation in informal discussions and group meetings, complemented by participatory observation and follow up discussions with some of the principal organizers of the *yatra*. To assess the public face of the march and its perceptions of nature and environment, the speeches made by the leaders of the *yatra* from different platforms, documentation of some press briefings, and published material distributed by the organizers during the march are also analysed.

The paper consists of five sections. The first section introduces the objectives and constituents of the *yatra*. The second section is an attempt to describe the course of the *yatra* and the interaction between the people and the participants in the *yatra* (henceforth referred to as *yatris*). The narrative in this section is structured by the journey-people interface. The third section identifies the major issues confronting the local communities that surfaced during the *yatra*. The fourth section analyses the march as representing the critical discourse and examines its problems and prospects. The final section consists of some concluding remarks.

### THE JUNGLE JIVAN BACHAO YATRA

In the early months of 1995, the Jungle Jivan Bachao Yatra,<sup>3</sup> passed through several national parks and sanctuaries in western and central India. In September 1994, at a meeting of grassroots—mostly NGO—activists held at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, a view was expressed that people living in and around national parks and sanctuaries had no forum to voice their concerns and that no attempt has been made to bring together these people and the officials of the forest and wildlife department, with the purpose of initiating a dialogue between them. The meeting highlighted the need to go 'beyond an articulation of the problems into an exploration of alternative strategies at conservation.'

#### **Yatra: Form and Content**

The use of the peaceful march as a strategy for mobilization dates back to the early days of the Indian freedom struggle. During the

independence struggle Gandhi used the *yatra* as an instrument of learning from the people and mobilizing them to protest against the state. Since those days the *yatra* has become an established political strategy in the country.<sup>4</sup> This mode of campaigning has been used in the environment movement as well. The Jungle Jivan Bachao Yatra bears legacy to a series of similar marches—the Save the Western Ghat March, the Sangharsh Yatra in the Narmada Valley to protest against the Sardar Sarovar Project, and the Save the Aravalli Padyatra undertaken by different actors of the environmental movement in India.

The purposes of the *yatra* were to ascertain the conditions of wildlife and human habitat in protected areas and to learn about the perceptions of different social actors and their experiences. Thus, it was a 'journey of discovery'. But this learning process was part of a wider mobilization strategy geared towards bringing together hitherto isolated and localized organizations, groups and grassroots activists into a wider network, for synthesising shared experiences as well as formulating strategies. Therefore the *yatra* was also a protest campaign over existing conservation thinking and management, documenting and voicing evidence of their non-participatory, elitist and ineffective character. Representing, as it was, various social actors articulating and mediating resource conflicts emerging from state conservation practices, the *yatra* was to 'help form bridges between such persons and groups so as to secure the future of these habitats (sanctuaries and national parks) and the wildlife they contain'.<sup>5</sup>

The *yatra*, being the brainchild of a group of NGOs and individuals actively involved in conservation, was endowed with an *a priori* understanding of the causes of the continuous decline of the protected areas. This understanding was meant to be sharpened with the marshalling of concrete experiences and evidence across states, so as to build up strong bases for demanding more effective and participatory conservation.

### Constituents

The participants in the *yatra* were members of conservation groups, NGOs and representatives of local communities living in and around the protected areas.<sup>6</sup> The latter were drawn primarily from the areas on which a few of the organizers had some influence. These community

representatives were directly or indirectly involved in the activities of their respective local NGOs. Overall, the *yatris* comprised a group of urban conservationists, researchers, activists and representatives of affected rural communities.

Four NGOs were assigned the task of organizing the *yatra*; the Tarun Bharat Sangh of Rajasthan, the Centre for Environmental Education, of Gujarat, the Maharashtra Arogya Mandal of Maharashtra and the Ekta Parishad of Madhya Pradesh. These NGOs undertook to organize the march in their respective states. Local grassroots organizations were also mobilized. In a few places, particularly in Gujarat, the forest and wildlife department of the government played host. The *modus operandi* of the *yatra* was to exchange ideas and discuss problems with local NGOs and concerned officials, visit the protected areas, campaign at the village level and discuss problems with the local communities.

### **Itinerary**

Using two jeeps, a mini-bus and a car the *yatra* covered a distance of about 14,000 km over a period of 50 days, traversing 18 national parks and sanctuaries in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. On an average the *yatra* consisted of about thirty people although this number swelled on occasion as local community organizations and activists joined it.

The itinerary included Sariska Tiger Reserve, the Keoladevo National Park in Bharatpur, Ranthambore National Park in Sawai Madhavpur, Jamwanagar Sanctuary near Jaipur and Phulwari ki Naal near Udaipur all located in Rajasthan, the Gir National Park, the Girnar Reserve, Hingolgarh Sanctuary and Shoolpaneswar Sanctuary, and some Joint Forest Management Schemes undertaken by the forest department in Gujarat, the Borivelli Reserve in Bombay, Koyna Sanctuary, Radhanagari Sanctuary, the Melghat Tiger Reserve and the Bhimashankar Sanctuary in Maharashtra, the Kanha Tiger Reserve and the Pench Reserve in Madhya Pradesh and the Shivpuri and Rajajii National Parks of Uttar Pradesh. The *yatra* culminated in Delhi after a visit to the Delhi Ridge. A concluding two-day convention was held in Delhi to evaluate the achievements and plan follow-up actions.



## FROM SARISKA TO BHIMASHANKAR: A NARRATIVE

### Beginning at Sariska

The *yatra* began from the village of Mallana, in the Sariska Tiger Reserve. The day-long inauguration ceremony was attended by several hundred villagers gathered from nearby villages. Recitals from *Ramayana* and worship of Nahardeo (the local tiger) deity were followed by community meetings, feasts and street theatre.

The Sariska Reserve was an ideal place to begin the *yatra*. The local pastoral community had faced serious problems when Sariska was declared a tiger reserve, particularly with regard to their grazing rights. A chain of limestone and marble mines operating in the park region had also seriously affected the forest, land and water regimes of the Gujjar community living in the park. Significantly, the forest department had been unable to counter the powerful forces which were behind the sanction and promotion of mining in that area. Mobilized by the Tarun Bharat Sangh, a local NGO, the local community took the struggle right up to the level of the Supreme Court of India, culminating in the banning of all mining activities in the national park area. The Tarun Bharat Sangh has also successfully resisted the attempts of park officials at relocating a number of villages falling within the 'core area' of the park.<sup>7</sup>

The Sangh, based in the village of Bikampura, has about 80 members on its staff. Its operations—advertised on the walls of the Sangh's headquarters—are spread over 200 surrounding villages. Rajinder Singh, its founder and secretary general—and incidentally, a *de facto* leader of the *yatra*—has become a popular and respected person in the area although he hails from Meerut district in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>8</sup> The congregation at Mallana was thus indicative of the Sangh's success in mobilizing community action, and served as an ideal beginning for the *yatra*, infusing optimism and hope.<sup>9</sup>

### Keoladeo National Park

The next destination was the Bharatpur National Park, a world-famous wetland reserve. The hosts, the Keoladeo Research Foundation and the local chapter of the Bombay Natural History Society, briefed the *yatris* on the major problem areas and the nature of their intervention. The

*yatris* visited several villages in the area to interact with the people and get a first-hand report of the current situation. A general opinion voiced in the villages was that the ban on grazing inside the park had adversely affected their economic position. A decade ago, seven villagers had been shot dead by the police during a protest over the ban. Since the ban, the per capita holding of cattle in the villages has declined dramatically, the well-off households, some owning up to 90 acres of land, have shifted to agriculture from cattle raising, but the poorer households have been hit hard. The poor have taken to rickshaw-pulling, which has become a big source of income because the park is now a major tourist attraction.

The local people argue that the ban on grazing adversely affected the national park itself. As proof, they point out that the Siberian cranes—once a major attraction in the park—had not been spotted for the last couple of years. According to one study (Vijayan 1987) the *Paspalum* grass in the park has overgrown as a result of the ban thereby choking shallow bodies of water the habitat of winter geese and ducks. The local people regard buffalo grazing as an important part of the wetland eco-system as grazing loosens the soil and dung is fed on by birds.

The *yatris* also had a meeting with the local chapter of the Khadi Gram Udyog, a Gandhian organization popularising cottage industries in the area. The possibilities of increasing employment opportunities and of creating alternative income-generating activities in the area were explored, as means of subsistence as well as to reduce human pressure on the national park. This was considered important since industrial activity is discouraged in Bharatpur because it may harm the fragile eco-system of the park.

### **Ranthambore National Park**

The Tiger Reserve at Ranthambore was the next destination. The host was the local chapter of the Centre for Environment Education, Ahmedabad, which had been working in some villages around the park. Activities in Ranthambore included village level meetings, a meeting with local officials of the park and a night trip to households in local villages. At Bodhal, near Sawai Madhavpur, the *yatris* addressed a village gathering after which informal discussions were held with the villagers. The discussions with villagers generally centered on the

problems they faced in their daily life. While access rights to grazing and fuelwood were mentioned, the periodic crop damage by wild animals was considered the most important problem facing the villagers. The *yatris* later had a first-hand experience of crop raiding, when they spent the night in the village of Moldongri situated in the park area. Almost the entire population of the village—women and children included—took turns to guard their fields from wild pigs, neelgais (bluebuck) and wild ducks. The village was divided on the issue of resettlement, with some villagers wanting to move out and others preferring to stay. The *yatris* decided to discuss the problem of crop raiding at the meeting with the local park officials. While the forest and wildlife officials had largely ignored the *yatra* at Sariska and Bharatpur, at Ranthambore they sat down to discuss and debate issues with the *yatris*. At an open forum which included some local journalists and activists, officials dealt at length with the current situation in the park, the resource needs of the local population and the ways and means by which these needs could be met in the near future. The officials recognized the need to involve the local communities in forest protection and mentioned the formation of forest protection committees in 16 villages, including the village of Bodhal. However, given the size of the area—the total area of the tiger project in Ranthambore is 1,300 sq km, and within a radius of 10 kms there are about 270 villages with a population of about 400,000 people—the officials admitted that so far only confidence-building measures had been initiated.

The officials also spelt out the adoption of park management strategies under the Global Environment Fund (GEF), an aid package of the World Bank created after the Rio Summit. The project area is divided into the core zone which remains untouched, the buffer zone, and the multiple use zone. The buffer zone caters to the fodder requirements of the local communities; some soil conservation measures are also undertaken periodically by employing local labour. The multiple use zone is now being created for fuelwood plantation to cater to the needs of the local people.

### **Phulwari ki Naal**

After conducting its first press conference in Jaipur, the convoy moved on to Phulwari ki Naal.<sup>10</sup> The area around the park is largely inhabited

by Bhils and Kathodias. As was evident in Ambavadi village—situated close to the buffer area of the sanctuary—these people faced some of the harshest living conditions. The access road to Ambavadi was barely passable, and no public transport facilities existed within a radius of 20 kms. The upper reaches of the forests were largely inhabited by the Bhils who cultivate some forest land. The Kathkari households, living in the lower reaches, owned some revenue cultivation plots. For most of the year, however, the population migrated to Surat and Ahmedabad in search of wage employment as the produce from the land lasted them less than two months.

At Ambavadi, a village meeting was held in the courtyard of a local organization (Action India) where the local Bhils and Kathodias spelt out their dependence on forest resources. The representative of a labour union from Vijaynagar *tehsil* in Gujarat provided details of the plight of labourers. Employment generation schemes undertaken by the forest department under different programmes—digging, stone fencing, construction of check dams, transportation of seedlings and road side plantations—were in violation of labour laws of the state, including the Minimum Wages Act.<sup>11</sup> The representative pointed out anomalies in the functioning of the Forest Development Corporation (FDC) in Gujarat. The corporation had been formed with the aim of preventing the private monopoly trading of minor forest products; it was made the sole agent for grading, harvesting, drying, transporting, marketing and auctioning any of the minor forest products including gum, lac, kendu leaves and mahua. However, the sub-agents of the corporation were the earlier traders who, therefore, have retained their stranglehold over the operations. Their exploitative labour practices continue unaltered.<sup>14</sup>

### **Hingolgarh Sanctuary**

Early in its second week, the *yatra* entered Gujarat and the Hingolgarh sanctuary. This sanctuary is being managed by a private institution, the GEER Foundation (Gujarat Environment Education and Research Foundation) since 1982. The sanctuary was initially the fodder growing area of the erstwhile maharaja, Rajkumar Thatcher, an eminent ornithologist. The forest department took it over in 1972, and declared it a sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act passed that year. Ten years later, the GEER Foundation inherited a degraded 'protected' area, almost on the

verge of being denotified, and converted it into a nature education sanctuary. Today the management proudly proclaims that successful protection has resulted in the regeneration of the forests. Villagers complained that some species of wildlife have proliferated causing damage to crops. Under the fodder development programme adopted two years ago, about 300,000 kg of grass is made available every year to the local Maldhari communities living around the sanctuary with a total cattle population of over seven thousand.

At a community meeting organized by the foundation, villagers complained about the inadequate responses of both the district administration and the park management on the issue of crop damage. The *yatris* were also asked if they had concrete plans for addressing this issue. Some suggested large-scale transfer of the animals to other protected areas. The alternative of bringing in carnivores like panthers from other protected areas to regulate the population of herbivores was proposed. Others suggested 'family planning' measures (castration of the male species). The possibilities of generating resources to build a protective wall around some villages were also discussed.

Representatives of the park management were more concerned about the bio-mass pressure on the sanctuary. They argued that the bulk of the cattle population in the villages was unproductive, the total milk output from about 7,000 cattle being an abysmally low 1,000 liters. They proposed a drastic culling of cattle, from the present 25 to about 3 per household to enhance milk production and ensure that the bio-mass in the area would be adequate for all the animals. The management also complained that the stall-feeding programme undertaken by them was not popular with the villagers, as it involved substantial labour. The Maldharis, they stated, operated on a 'zero cost economy' and always preferred to let the cattle graze on their own.

The visit to the Hingolgarh Sanctuary clearly established one thing. Despite a more receptive management, human pressure on the protected areas continues to be exerted, as the lifestyles of the local communities remain unchanged. The management's attempts to alter these practices have met with lukewarm response, if not resistance.

### **Girnar Reserve**

The *yatra*'s next destination was the Lion Reserve at Gir. On its way to Gir the *yatra* made a stopover at Junagadh. It joined a local organization, the National Nature Education Foundation, in honouring a Divisional Commissioner of Forests who had done exemplary work in protecting and regenerating the Girnar protected forest. The foundation was also active in mobilizing the citizenry in Junagadh against a proposed 'Ramkatha recital', a recital of the Hindu epic *Ramayana* by Morari Bapu<sup>12</sup> in the Girnar Forests. They fear that the large number of devotees would be attracted to the recital thereby upsetting the fragile ecology.

The honour bestowed on the Divisional Commissioner of Forests (DCF) by a local environmental organization raised a new set of issues. Unlike in other protected areas where the local communities were hostile to the government officials, here in Junagadh the local people were honouring a forest official for his contribution to conservation. They were mostly the people from the town itself, and were well educated, government employees and middle-class nature lovers and not poor people depending on the forests for their subsistence. Yet this should not undermine the fact that government officials can often ensure that conservation is both successful and sustainable.

In his acceptance address the DCF echoed nature lovers' views on conservation. His suggestions for successful conservation was motivating lower-level staff, improving the living conditions of forest guards and the communication systems.

### **Gir National Park and Sanctuary**

Home to the Asiatic Lion, the Gir National Park was at the centre of a controversy when the *yatra* reached it. The state government had allotted about 20 hectares of forest land to a temple trust in the heart of the sanctuary whereas a few decades ago the government had displaced several hundred Maldhari families—pastoral communities residing inside the forests—to minimise human interventions.

The *yatra*'s itinerary included a visit to a resettled village and to the park. The Wildlife Warden at Gir briefed the *yatra* on the problem of land allotment to the temple trust and on the grievances of the displaced communities. During discussions the local Maldharis from Jullender, a resettlement village outside the sanctuary, stated that, contrary to the

claims of the park management, the lion population had declined drastically over the years. They claimed that the frequency of appearance of herds of lions had decreased, and the average size of a herd had fallen from 20-25 to the present size of five to eight.

Here too, the contentious issue was the denial of grazing rights after the formation of the park. While living inside the forests, the community used to have easy access to forest resources. Initially, the forest department had adopted what was known as the 'coop system' which supplied the fodder requirements of the local communities through specific enclosures inside the forests. After the success of the first coop more coops were made available while the first one was left to regenerate. After 1978, however, this facility was withdrawn. Now even the grass periodically cut from the forests is no longer offered to the local villagers but is auctioned off to outside contractors.

The villagers claimed that curtailment of their traditional rights not only adversely affected their economic condition but has also resulted in the degradation of the forests. According to them, the frequency of illegal cutting has gone up because of the absence of any human settlements inside, which acted as a strong deterrent. Illegal felling has resulted in the decline of herbivores like cheetals and neelgais, the main prey for the lions. Owing to paucity of game the lions have taken to attacking human beings.

The Maldharis were less worried about losing buffaloes in raids by lions than the denial of access to forest products. Villagers claimed that when the lions had cattle to prey on, human life was safe and also, since they were acquainted with the movements of lions, they took precautionary measures for their cattle. In cases of loss of cattle they received compensation through the department of forest and wildlife.

The 28 households which were forcibly resettled in Jullender village received compensation packages that included about eight acres of cultivable land per family. The villagers complained that the officials threatened to burn their dwellings if they refused the compensation and continued to stay in the area, and that the promise of two acres of grazing land per household as part of the compensation package was never fulfilled. The villagers resorted to agriculture, an occupation that was completely alien to them. The Maldharis were extremely agitated over their displacement and their subsequent resettlement. When asked if

they wanted to return to the forests, they stated that they might consider it provided their cattle holdings were restored to their previous sizes and their traditional grazing rights protected. Notwithstanding such vehement protests, however, it was evident that they were better off compared to the Kathkaris in Phulwari ki Naal to other ethnic communities that the *yatra* met in Shoolpaneswar and Bhimashankar.

### **Shoolpaneswar Sanctuary**

The Shoolpaneswar Sanctuary has been in the limelight ever since the government of Gujarat decided to rename the Dhomkal Sloth Bear Sanctuary and extend its boundary from 150 sq km area to 60 0 sq km, up to shoreline of the reservoir of the Sardar Sarovar Dam. The governmental resolution to extend the existing boundary of the sanctuary was primarily in response to critical remarks made in environmental studies on the adverse effects that the Sardar Sarovar Project could have on the wildlife habitat in the region. The formation of the sanctuary has, however, created fresh problems for the government.

There has been considerable opposition to the notification of the sanctuary by the local Vasava community. Fearing curtailment of usufruct, the community—spread over a hundred villages—has organized itself under the banner of Gujarat Vanvasi Sangathan and has petitioned the government to withdraw the notification. The Arch Vahini, a local NGO based in Mangrol and a critical actor in the Narmada movement, has mobilized support within and for the community in this regard.

The Vahini was the host to the Yatra at Shoolpaneswar. Its founder, Anil Patel, delineated the grounds for opposing the formation of the sanctuary. Patel stated that the sanctuary which would cover an area of 45,000 hectares, would deprive the tribals of the forest land, restrict their rights of access to minor forest produce and timber. As the Vindhya and Satpura ranges have experienced extensive deforestation due to indiscriminate tree felling, the tribals, who subsisted on forest produce and forest land, had been impoverished. The setting up of the sanctuary would exacerbate their condition because they have to forego their customary rights. Patel<sup>13</sup> was also sceptical about the number of sloth bears and other wild animals in the area, given the relentless attacks on their habitat. In a village meeting in Sakri, situated at the heart of the sanctuary, the local Vasavas expressed similar views. The turnout here



was by far the largest that the *yatra* had witnessed and more than half of those gathered were women. The rationale of forming a sanctuary was questioned. According to local claims, as there was no significant forest cover, the area of the Sardar Sarovar Dam would not really reduce forest cover. In any case, the imminence of displacement had encouraged the residents to cut down the trees in connivance with the forest department. The people said that a powerful syndicate with strong connections in the forest bureaucracy has a vested interest in declaring the area as a sanctuary. It was also claimed that, as there were no significant wildlife in the area the government had resorted to importing animals from elsewhere. They fear that such decisions pose a threat to the lives of both humans and cattle.

The people complained against the monopoly rights over minor forest produce claimed by the Forest Development Corporation which had reduced their earnings. They also raised the issue of leasing out bamboo to the Central Pulp Mills located in Bharuch. As Manga Bhai, an activist of the Vanvasi Sangathan, argued: 'When we bring something from the forests it becomes a crime, whereas when outsiders come and take tonnes of timber and bamboo it is not. Why? When the government is asked about this, it says things are being done as per the law' (Interview, village Sakri, dated 24. 1. 95). The resentment of the local community was summed up by Buddi Bahen, a young woman activist of the Sangathan:

This place has been declared as a sanctuary in lieu of the forest coming under submergence because of the SSP. But we have seen that there was never any forest in the submergence area of the SSP. The people coming under submergence lost agricultural land and have received compensation. So why have they declared a sanctuary here? Because of the fact that we have a sanctuary now the government states that there can be no roads, water or electricity. All development work stops because of the law (Proceedings of the community meeting, village Sakri, dated 24. 1. 95).<sup>14</sup>

The local opposition to the declaration of a sanctuary and their demand for denotification posed a classic problem for the *yatra*. At one level, supporting the demand for denotification countered the very objectives

of conservation that the *yatra* espoused; on the other, arbitrary impositions like the one at Shoolpaneswar could only succeed by depriving and alienating the local population. This problem was to be debated later at the concluding convention in Delhi.

Shoolpaneswar was the last protected area visited in Gujarat. Before entering Maharashtra the *yatris* visited sites where Joint Forest Management schemes of the forest department have been executed in co-operation with the local communities. The details and prospects of such schemes are discussed later in the paper.

### **Discussion on the Dang**

On its way to Borivelli National Park, the *yatra* had an overnight stop at the Sampoorna Kranti Vidyalaya situated in the Dang Bharuch border at Bedchi. A delegation of the Dangi Lok Adhikar Samiti, an organization active on the land question in the Dang Forests in south-east Gujarat, met the *yatris* to explain the specific problems of the local communities—particularly Bhils and Warlis—living in the Dang forest reserves. The major demand of the organization has been for the regularization of ‘encroached’ forest land that the Bhils—constituting about 40 per cent of the population—have been cultivating for years. The demand for land regularization is an age-old one and has been met occasionally under different regimes, colonial and postcolonial, with the last regularization taking place in 1980. Of the 306 villages falling in the reserve forest area only about 15 are revenue villages, the rest being classified as forest villages with some regularization of deeds in them. The bulk of the private revenue land in the reserve is owned by rich Konkanis, who came into the Dang from around Nasik in Maharashtra in the aftermath of the Deccan riots in Ahmednagar and Poona districts in the 1870s. Even within the forest villages, where land has been regularized and privatized, it is largely in the hands of the Konkanis.

Even when demands for land regularization have come up for consideration, it has been difficult to prove encroachment due to the unprofessional behaviour of the forest department. Its preference for collecting unofficial fines for encroachments in kind rather than in cash leaves the cultivator with no official document to prove that s/he has been cultivating a particular patch of land (albeit illegally) for a given period. Although, the *sarpanch*, the political head of a village (or a

cluster of villages), is authorized to give evidence that a patch has been cultivated for generations, this is not considered sufficient evidence; those calling the shots in the region are the bureaucrats led by the District Forest Officer and the District Collector.

The activists of the *samiti* reject claims about the impact of human activities, particularly cultivation practices, on the forest eco-system. Where cultivation is undertaken there is no felling of trees and therefore the argument that cultivation affects forests does not hold. The fear of further possible encroachment were also ruled out. It was stated that if land holdings were regularized, then village organizations would be the right institutions to offer guarantees against further encroachment.

The Dang struggle has received very little support so far from the people's movements and organizations in Gujarat. Like the Sardar Sarovar Project in Navagam and the Nuclear Power Plant at Kakrapar, which are forbidden terrain for people's organization, the Dang struggle has been fought in virtual isolation. In this context, local activists expressed concern that the *yatra* had not included the Dang Reserve Forests in its itinerary.

### **Borivelli National Park**

The *yatra*'s agenda in Borivelli had a metropolitan flavour and understandably so, as the park is situated in North Bombay in an urban setting.<sup>15</sup> It included an early morning 'nature trail' in the park, followed by a meeting with representatives of local organizations, the press and senior forest officials of the state including the Chief Wildlife Warden of Maharashtra. In the afternoon the *yatris* were to be guests at a painting competition for school children in Borivelli.

The condition of the park is extremely fragile. There is intense pressure on it from tourists, particularly the local population of Bombay who find it an ideal location to escape from the hustle and bustle of metropolitan living. A large section of the park area has been encroached upon through the activities of powerful slum lords of the city. These slum lords, in tandem with builders and land developers, get immigrant workers to settle in unauthorized plots in and around Borivelli. Once these plots are registered in the names of the actual inhabitants they are evicted by force and the plots are then sold for a high price. At the meeting, the Chief Warden of the park himself stated: 'Conservation will

increasingly become difficult given the extent of commercial and industrial pressures on the protected areas and therefore it is very necessary that other social actors take up an active role in making the endeavour a successful one' (Citizen Group Meeting, Borivelli National Park, dated 26. 1. 95). He admitted, however, that the management had no immediate action plan to counter the degradation of the park.

### **Bhimashankar Sanctuary**

The Bhimashankar sanctuary is famous for its many sacred groves, called 'Deorai' in the local language. The Deorais are large tracts of forests left untouched by the local population as they are believed to be the abode of the forest gods. Widely acknowledged by environmentalists as efficient conservation methods, these traditional practices are said to have emerged from the cultural fabric of the local communities.<sup>16</sup> Environmentalists argue that such practices and knowledge systems need to be restored and made an integral part of modern conservation measures. The Maharashtra Arogya Mandal, one of the organizers of the *yatra*, has done pioneering work in and around the sanctuary. With the help of the local community activists it has identified all major local flora species and documented their traditional uses. The Mandal has also taken up soil conservation measures in some of the Deorais in the area.

Predictably, the agenda for the *yatris* included a visit to one of the sacred groves in the area. Spread over 7 to 8 acres of thick forest tracts, the sacred grove was clearly identifiable by its dense growth. At one side of the grove there is a small temple, and ironically, a recently-laid unmetalled road has been constructed right through the grove. When asked how this was allowed, a local inhabitant expressed the community's helplessness before the wishes of the 'sarkar'.

At a village meeting in the Mandal headquarters the local people mentioned crop raiding by wild boars as their major problem. However, forest officials and some *yatris* expressed the opinion that an exclusive focus on human problems should be discarded in favour of a position that is sensitive to animal rights. It was the first time in the *yatra* that animal rights as an issue was addressed in an open forum. From Bhimashankar the *yatra* went on to cover seven more national parks and sanctuaries till it reached Delhi on the 28th of February 1995.

## CONTOURS OF RESOURCE CONFLICTS

The following summaries reflect the nature of resource conflicts in some of the protected areas covered during the *yatra*.

### **Pastoral Rights**

One of the most frequently voiced demands that the *yatra* documented and supported was the restoration of the traditional grazing rights of the local pastoral communities. The ban on grazing has been overtly resisted in Bharatpur and Ranthambore (Rajasthan), and in Rajaji National Park (Uttar Pradesh) where the local Gujjar community has carried on a protracted agitation against it. Resistance is also visible in routine everyday forms, subverting official regulations and sanctions. Bribing forest guards is the common practice. Very often cattle just stray into the parks, especially during the monsoon seasons. The popular belief is that cattle instinctively run towards the forest at the onset of monsoons.

The ban on grazing has indeed affected the pastoral community. In Melghat, for instance, where officials had sanctioned allotments for fodder development programmes in the buffer zones, it has not altered the reluctance of local communities to carry head loads of grass to feed their cattle. 'Why should one carry head-loads when the cattle can just walk in and eat?', ask the villagers from Merhat in the Melghat Sanctuary, referring obviously to the thick growth of grass which has been the consequence of the ban on grazing. This reluctance, however, has earned them the epithet of 'lazy people' who function in a 'zero cost economy'.

### **Fuel-Wood Crisis**

For rural communities living in and adjacent to sanctuaries and parks the availability of fuel wood itself is not as acute a problem as it is for their rural counterparts elsewhere; their problem is one of access because of the stringent regulations governing the protected areas. In many of these areas, to get fuel wood people bribe forest guards. The system has become institutionalized in many places in the form of fixed rates per head-load. For the poorer households, such illegal collection is also a source of income; they can sell fuel wood in the nearby villages and towns. Such collection and sale of fuel wood is entirely carried out by

women and children. Local communities also face difficulties in procuring fuel wood for special occasions like funerals and weddings when large quantities are required, and hence they resort to bribing the forest guards. Their representatives have pointed out that although the wood brought for funerals is prohibited for other uses, quantities much in excess of the requirement for such occasions are collected because a bribe is paid.<sup>17</sup> Local activists support such arguments and even suggest that free access to such resources will have a less damaging impact, because people would then take only what they require. This view is contradicted by the official position according to which free access causes inefficient use of resources and could lead to denudation of forests and acute scarcity of fuel wood.

The middle ground between these contending positions is now being explored under the Joint Forest Management (JFM) schemes being implemented by some state governments. Under the JFM scheme, the forest department takes on the protection, regeneration and plantation of forests with the help of the local communities so as to primarily cater to the fuel wood and fodder needs of the communities. There are also direct economic benefits. When dense patches are periodically loomed, cleaned and the timber sold, the local community gets 25 per cent of the sale. After 25 years, when the forest matures for harvesting, 50 per cent of the sales proceeds would accrue to the local community.

In Mandvi village, where this scheme was in operation, the *panchayat* leader explained its mechanics. The area had dense forests 50 years ago, but pressures largely from the local communities led to depletion and degradation. Facing severe crises of fuel wood, fodder and logs for house repair, the communities agreed to the JFM scheme which was initiated with 65 members on 25 hectares of land. Today, all the village households are covered under this scheme and the entire forest area in the region (of about 500 hectares) has been brought under it. The villagers have access to fodder and fuel wood from these areas and their requirements are regulated by the JFM village committee.

Despite its innovative features and its relative success the scheme has been viewed with suspicion for several reasons. First, with the initiation of JFM schemes on pasture land under the forest department, their character as village commons with open access has changed to controlled access only for the members of the JFM committee in the

village.<sup>18</sup> Often the poorer inhabitants, backward tribal communities and women of the villages are left out of such committees.<sup>19</sup> This means that the rural male elite who already own and control agricultural land would extend its control to forests and forest products as well. Second, these schemes prove to be environmentally unsustainable because they promote monoculture of the species which have high market value, thereby reducing biodiversity. The proposed harvest of the forest in 20 years implies that nothing of the 'forest' would remain after the harvest. Thirdly, the participatory element of the scheme is very much restricted only to protection of the forests and is in no way demonstrative of any joint 'management'. All the major decisions are taken by the officials of the forest department. Although the plan was to hand over the forest for local management after the first five years, the tardiness in registering the JFM committee have led to delay in its implementation.

### **Minor Forest Products**

Although government resolutions and legislation on the collection, harvesting and trading of MFPs (minor forest products) differ from state to state, it is well known that most of the States prefer to retain monopoly rights over profitable MFPs. Usually kendu/bidi leaves<sup>20</sup> form the maximum share—about 45 per cent—in the returns from MFPs. In the financial year 1993-94, the Madhya Pradesh government's annual turnover from this sector was Rs. 200 crores. Other MFPs yield less but their contribution is nevertheless substantial. In the Balaram Sanctuary in Banaskantha District in Gujarat, the turnover from gum is estimated to be roughly Rs 15 lakh per week during the peak season. Where the States have allowed private trading of MFPs, big monopolies have emerged. In Gujarat, the bidi business is controlled by three traders, one of whom controls the trade in 40 of the 120 units that constitute the Gujarat forests. This is despite the fact that the monopoly over MFPs lies with the Gujarat Forest Development Corporation.

However, the collection and petty trading of MFPs are crucial for the survival needs and income augmentation of the poor, particularly in the tribal areas. Fruits, roots and berries are added to the survival portfolio in the most vulnerable months; vegetables are collected usually after two months of rain. Gum, mahua, lac, honey and saag seeds are other major MFPs that provide additional income to the local forest communities.

The collection cycle of MFPs suggests that income from these is crucial for survival during the dry months until the agriculture season begins after the rains. The demand for access to and control over MFPs was clearly articulated in the Vasava villages in Shoolpaneswar where the Gujarat Vanavasi Sangathan has been demanding the abolition of the monopoly of the Gujarat Forest Development Corporation, a free market, and fair prices for the MFP. In at least two other parks representatives of the local communities demanded access to MFPs and expected the *yatra* to take up this issue with the officials in Delhi.

### **Commercial and Industrial Pressures**

While local communities have systematically experienced curtailment of usufruct and access rights to forests and in many places have been displaced from their original habitats, all in the name of conservation, in the majority of the parks, commercial and industrial activities which are detrimental to the cause of conservation have been allowed. As these areas gradually become degraded, pressures from powerful interest groups lead to their denotification. Many national parks and sanctuaries such as the Melghat and Radhanagari in Maharashtra, the Narayan Sarovar in Gujarat, Bhitarkanika and Balukhand in Orissa have either been denotified or face denotification. The Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary in Kutch, for example, has recently been denotified to make way for a cement factory, while the Gulf of Kutch marine national park faces denotification because of a proposed oil refinery by the Reliance industries.

The *yatra* came across several ongoing commercial activities in the protected areas. Large-scale bamboo extraction from the Shoolpaneswar Sanctuary by the Central Pulp Mills has been allowed, while the forest officials harass local villagers wanting fuel wood or small timber for house repairs. Open-cast marble mining is carried out in and around the Jamva Ramgarh Sanctuary in Rajasthan. In Ranthambore, the Geological Survey of India is now carrying out a prospective survey of mineral areas adjacent to the park.

Such activities are nevertheless supported by conservation officials. For instance, bamboo extraction was justified on the ground that it allowed sunlight into the park which the herbivorous animals liked! Mineral exploration and mining were justified for their economic



benefits and for providing employment opportunities to the local population. And when the issue of general corruption was taken up for discussion in the context of illegal logging in the park areas, the response was that the entire system is corrupt and it was unfair to isolate the forest department for criticism. As one official put it, 'So long as a sleeping berth in a railway train is available for (a bribe of) Rs 100 the problem of corruption will continue to exist.'

### **Crop Damage by Wild Animals**

Crop damage by the wild animals led to a direct clash of interests between the local communities and conservation groups. The loss to the local economy at places is computed to be 50 per cent of the total crop output. In 1987, the Maharashtra Arogya Mandal attempted to quantify the extent of crop damage by wild boars. A survey conducted in 25 hamlets that year revealed that about 96,000 kg of grain was destroyed by wild animals, resulting in a loss of Rs 2,32,000. In 1993, the survey was repeated and the damage computed was 90,820 kg of grain valued at Rs 4,53,000.

While state governments offer compensation for attacks on people and cattle and humans by wild animals, crop damage, which is more rampant, has been kept out of the purview of compensation. In fact, officials claim that compensation schemes for crop damages do not exist because of the difficulties in devising and implementing them.<sup>21</sup> Preventive measures which could minimise the damage, such as translocation of wild animals, fencing of parks and sanctuaries, financial allocations for employing watchmen and even (as one local group suggested) castration of the male animals, require more funds. The officials also have to shed their apathy to such problems.

Extensive crop damage usually occurs because of over breeding among herbivores. Of course, park officials attribute the increase of herbivores to successful conservation strategies. But this increase could well be due to a sharp decline in the number of carnivores. It is not coincidental that in protected areas where there is reported merciless poaching of leopards and tigers, crop damage from herbivores is simultaneously reported and has become a serious problem.

**Forest Land and Forest Wage Labour**

'Encroachments' on forest land, and the demands for regularization of such lands have been contentious issues for the conservation movement. Cultivation of forest land is an age-old and widespread practice primarily, though not exclusively, in Adivasi areas. In some areas in western India, the forest department itself has leased out land for a specific tenure for cultivation. Even then, major portions of forest land under cultivation are deemed to have been 'encroached' upon by the state agencies. The fact that population pressure and the consequent ecological pressure on the local communities forces them to bring more forest land under cultivation is, however, entirely ignored.

Within the conservation movement itself, demands for regularization do not find much support and are treated with suspicion. The *yatra* revealed the uneasiness of conservationists when confronted with such demands. The struggles in the Dangs and in Shoolpaneswar over 'encroachment' received almost no attention compared to other elements of conflicts that the *yatra* chose to highlight. The issue of exploitative labour regimes in the forests was also left out of the *yatra*'s discourse. Given that these regimes are hidden from the public gaze, the *yatra* could at least have brought to light the high-handedness of the forest officials in interpreting labour laws.

**Standard Environmental Narrative**

The *yatra* represented several organizations and action groups with differing perspectives on and approaches to conservation. The minimal consensus that prevailed over the issue of conservation related to the resource conflict between urban/industrial and local needs. Throughout the *yatra* the leaders took recourse to populist rhetoric on the rural-urban divide by highlighting the rising consumption demands of the urban industrial enclaves, condemning the urban way of life and eulogizing the virtues of rural living and its customary bond with nature and environment. The rationale of the *yatra* to a village gathering was explained thus by Rajinder Singh:

When governments talk of forest destruction they state that people living in villages are irresponsible and they destroy forests. They keep attaching this stigma on us, whereas actually they are the ones

who have played a major role in the destruction process. We want to bring this truth to light before the world, before the nation and the people. that those who have been hitherto accused (by the government) of destroying forests do not actually do so . . . In this *yatra* we . . . want to erase this stigma attached to villagers as destroyers of forests. Villagers do not cut forests, for they know that their lives are dependent on it (speech, Village Mallana, dated 14. 1. 95).

In an encounter with some forest officials Singh claimed; 'I do not, for one, believe that people for whom forests are an integral part of their lives, a base for their livelihood, are not worried about them. There is no evidence whatsoever to prove that something that gives the people air, food, medicines and milk is being ignored by them.' Kusum Karnik of the Maharashtra Arogya Mandal, another leader, said in one of her speeches:

We (people living in villages around forests) are poor people, we only bring minor products and other such items from the forests. We never destroy the forests. Is it possible for us to cut those huge trees and carry them to our homes? Small twigs and branches are enough for us. The forest is our mother. We have lived with it. It is an age old bond. If the government wants us to break this relationship, we will not do so. The fact is that the wood from the forests are required by the rich, the urbanites, because they need huge cots, tables and chairs. They even need their handkerchiefs to be made out of paper. They care little about our forests getting depleted. We, the people who live in the forest, know it like we know our mothers. We live by drinking its milk and not its blood (Speech, Village Bodhal, dated 18. January 95).

Such a projection of the rural community was not just a strategy of consciousness-raising nor was it a confidence-winning measure. It reflected the *yatra's* understanding of the problems and prospects of conservation, which can be summed up as follows:

- a) People living in and around forests are critically dependent on the forests for their livelihood. Because of this dependency they share an integral bond with the forests and live in harmony with them. Age-old traditions and customs guide the manner in which people in these communities use the forest resources. This relationship is neither extractive nor exploitative.
- b) Conservation policies adopted by the government in recent years have alienated the local people from their traditional resource base while privileging urban industrial needs. This has resulted in the wanton destruction of wildlife habitats.
- c) Despite the alienation most of the people in these communities are inclined towards conservation and protection of the forests. Hence conservation policies must address the question of participation, making use, in the process, of traditional conservation methods and practices.
- d) Participation also implies sharing in the benefits of conservation by granting the local communities access to and control over the distribution of forest resources so that their livelihood needs are met.

### **Public Face of the Yatra**

<sup>1</sup> The *yatra's* understanding on conservation apart, it was important for it to define the interests that it represented. With a fair share of urban nature lovers and environmentalists participating, it was almost compelled to magnify its rural orientation, in order to live up to the image it had come to project of itself.

The *yatra* was therefore projected as representing the interests of those village communities which have experienced the effects of official conservation practices. It provided a platform for communities living in and around protected areas to come together and exchange their ideas and experiences with each other. On several occasions the leaders, who were themselves NGO activists, projected the *yatra* as representing rural communities hailing from different parts of the country.<sup>22</sup> The names of these *yatris*—Nanak Ram, Sedu Ram, Prabhu Gujjar, Mohammad Khan and Bechain Das—were repeatedly mentioned, particularly in village level meetings and press conferences. The fact that the *yatra* had a sizeable (more than two-thirds) contingent of urban environmentalists

and 'rurban' NGO activists—interacting with but certainly not belonging to the grassroots, was deliberately sidelined.

Towards this end, Nanak Ram Gujjar, a community leader of Haripura village in Sariska, played a significant role and served as a symbol par excellence for the *yatra's* public face. He had been in the forefront of the Sariska struggle against mining along with the Tarun Bharat Sangh and had also participated in the Save the Aravalli March from Sariska to Delhi. These experiences made Nanak Ram conversant with the prevailing critical discourse on conservation, as was amply demonstrated when he spoke during the *yatra*:

We have a bond, a relationship with the forests and we have to work towards their protection. Nothing can be left to the government. (If so) it will only result in the depletion of the forests. Forests and tigers are fast dwindling. The local communities need to get united and organized to save their forests (Speech, Village Bodhal, dated 18. 1. 95).

In Nanak Ram's view, the *yatra* represented the voice and perception of the rural subaltern, essentially the nature loving, and those working against all odds to protect forests and lives from the destructive designs of the state. His dramatic rendition of the 'Sariska story' only reiterated this fact:

During early days there were a lot of tigers and wolves in the forests and they would eat a lot of our cattle. But we never bothered about such loss. For we know that the tiger is the king of the forests (sic!) and is also a predator. . . . When the tiger project in Sariska was initiated, the government first formed the sanctuary and then later on converted it into a national park and occupied it. The laws enabled them to kill the tigers, skin them, bury their flesh and sell the skin in the big cities. All this while, we were deprived systematically of our customary rights. While initially the government said that nothing would happen to us, in about two years it cut our throat with such force that we did not even get a place to urinate (Ibid.).

As well as telling the story well, there was an acknowledgement of the dominant role of Rajinder Singh ('*bhaisahab*') and his Tarun Bharat Sangh in the struggle at Sariska. Thus not only was Nanak Ram making the *yatra's* claim of rural representation legitimate, he was also effectively endorsing the activities of conservation groups and NGOs at the grassroots.

The ruralization of the *yatra's* image was in many ways necessary. How else could it differentiate itself from the nature lovers among the urban middle class elite, who were the early actors of the conservation movement in India? The contribution of this section of the movement for nature preservation notwithstanding, the emergence and articulation of new social actors with a strong grassroots base has exposed such conservation policies and strategies as elitist. However, this difference in perceptions between the old and the new actors has not prevented them from coming together. The success of the *yatra* demonstrates the growing ties between these two sets of actors. The *yatra* in its conception, objectives and its protagonists, reflected the growing bond between the two sets of actors. Yet the new actors of the conservation movement have staked claims to a new constituency of rural interests. The rural face of the *yatra* was therefore a prerequisite if its claim to speak on behalf of the rural subaltern was to be justified. Nanak Ram's contribution was to render this claim legitimate.

This trend is characteristic of almost all major environmental movements in India. As grassroots problems begin to dominate the environmental agenda, a struggle over representation of rural interests ensues in which different social actors, including the state, claim to be working in the interest of this new constituency. Persons such as Nanak Ram symbolize these new claims. The example of the famous Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) against the Sardar Sarovar Project is illuminating. In Narayan Bhai Tadvī, the *sarpanch* of Manibeli, the first village facing submergence in Maharashtra, the NBA has found a spokesperson well-conversant with its lexicon. In NBA's public disposition, Narayan Bhai Tadvī constitutes the subaltern. While the leaders claim representation of the subaltern, Tadvī, like Nanak Ram, ratifies these claims.

It is important to underscore the fact that the state agencies, on their part, have also begun to adopt similar strategies in order to gain

legitimacy for their actions at the level of the grassroots. The Joint Forest Management sites in Gujarat highlight this point well, with forest officials presenting the local *panchayat* leaders to speak about the success of the scheme in their areas and the benefits they have derived from these projects. Of all the meetings that the *yatra* attended, those connected with JFM and involving forest officials became the most vociferous and unpleasant. The point is that the clash of the *yatra* leadership and the forest officials was as much over the functioning of the JFM scheme as over the government agencies' claim to represent the interests of the grassroots.

### **Private is Political**

While significant efforts were directed towards projecting the rural face of the *yatra* as its authentic face, the rural participants had very little role to play in organization and decision-making during the *yatra*. The majority of them—relatively well-off and elderly, with less familial responsibilities—were just happy to be a part of it. For them, it was a sort of a pilgrimage, an opportunity to visit different places.<sup>23</sup> For the leadership, rural participants were precious cargo, whose comfort was to be ensured. Input from them was however, deemed unnecessary.

The decision-making, of course, was the prerogative of its leaders. But they often had sharp differences. In fact, at one point the *yatra* was to split into two; one faction wanted to go to Narayan Sarovar Marine Park, and the other to Gir forests. Timely interventions prevented a serious split. While these incidents could be dismissed as insignificant—dissent being integral to democratic practice—they are indicative of the character of the *yatra* leadership. For any protest movement, leaders are important, as is the case with the environmental movement. There is a tendency to rely heavily on charismatic leaders, to mobilize people and resources for such movements. But this may prove adverse to institution-building. The split which the *yatra* faced was the outcome of a clash of personalities rather than a dispute over issues at hand.

### **Empowerment: Class Blind, Gender Sensitive**

Despite reflecting a few disturbing trends within the environmental movement, the *yatra* established that social actors working at the

grassroots can achieve significant success in mobilizing and organizing people. In Sariska and Shoolpaneswar, the Tarun Bharat Sangh and the Arch Vahini respectively, organized the local population to articulate their demands and intervened through socio-economic projects to alter the prevalent conditions and perceptions of the people. Thus if Sariska can boast of a 'Sonchuri', a sanctuary declared and maintained by the local people, with locally set rules and sanctions, the mobilization at Shoolpaneswar has resulted in a strong people's movement, which not only demands the denotification of the sanctuary but also the infrastructure facilities: irrigation, power and access to markets.

The limitations, however, have been in the conceptualization of rural people as homogeneous entities. In making the rural-urban divide the central problem, the disparities that exist within the rural population get neglected. While this may not be a major problem in tribal areas where land holdings and other means of livelihood are more evenly dispersed between regions, the village population is sharply divided along class lines. For instance, in the villages around the Sariska Reserve, land distribution is very uneven. Among those gathered at Mallena to send off the *yatra* were people who owned as little as 3 bighas of land while others owned more than 150 bighas. For the marginal farmers and the landless in this area, small cattle holding and non-farm occupations are vital for sustenance. During visits to some mine sites, the local, largely landless people, confessed that the closure of mines in the area has severely affected their economic conditions, and even asked some of the *yatris* to ensure their resumption.<sup>24</sup> The assumption, therefore, that the benefits from local access and control will accrue equally to all sections often turns out to be erroneous.

The gender divide within the rural population was also glossed over though the *yatra* revealed more sensitivity to it as a problem. In the sites visited, the collection and sale of fuel wood and MFPs were women's jobs. Women also worked as forest wage labourers for private contractors or under government schemes. The specific nature of their problems necessitated not just a degree of sensitivity but a well-formulated strategy to properly document their perceptions. Apart from Shoolpaneswar, where women turned up in large numbers and spoke about their problems, in other places the *yatra* heard only male voices. Women, though encouraged to speak, seldom did so. During



dialogues with forest officials, government schemes under the eco-development projects were scrutinized for gender sensitivity. In one such encounter, the *yatra* had to account for its own under-representation of women. During a meeting with the forest officials and beneficiaries of the JFM schemes at Jara village in Gujarat, some *yatris* were critical of the lack of representation of women among the people who were gathered. The District Forest Officer, while explaining the difficulties in mobilizing women, in turn wondered why there were so few women in the *yatra*!

What needs to be clarified here is the fact that the *yatra* had no specific agenda or action plan to document problems specific to women, a fact that may be attributed to the lack of an informed women's perspective on conservation-related resource conflict. Unlike the class question though, which it deliberately ignored, it did demonstrate a general awareness of the women's question and expressed a need to incorporate it in the agenda of the conservation movement.

## CONCLUSION

### **New Politics and Populism**

The *yatra* reflected the general political trend of the conservation movement. Conservation politics has witnessed a shift in agency from urban environmentalists to grassroots activists. The central focus of the agitation has moved from conservation of wilderness to integrating human needs into conservation. The agitational mode/form no longer relies predominantly on lobbying but on grassroots activism. These shifts have decisively redefined the boundaries of conservation politics. While it would be appropriate to welcome such shifts towards community rights of access and control, one needs to be cautious, particularly in lending support to movements which turn out to be populist in form and content. In the discourse of the *yatra*, rural communities were projected not just as having a unified set of interests but also as essentially conservationist in their approach to nature and environment. Activities of the rural people which were detrimental to the cause of conservation, were considered as proof of their alienation from their productive resources, which was seen as the consequence of a 'non-participatory, elitist' conservation agenda. The existential realities

amidst which rural communities live and within which they demand roads, water, irrigation facilities and employment opportunities, quite apart from their grievances over deprivation of forest resources, were suppressed to focus on a seemingly broader set of contradictions between local usufruct and access on the one hand and state-led conservation strategies on the other.

### **End as the Beginning**

In the concluding convention held in Delhi on February 28, 1995 some of these tenets of the *yatra* were critically reviewed by a group of invited environmentalists, activists, intellectuals and researchers. The use of the 'rural-urban divide' was singled out for its erroneous implications. As one of the invitees pointed out: 'To understand that all is well in the urban areas is naive, for about 70 per cent of the population in these areas are in acute poverty, struggling for sustenance' (Roy 1995). The *yatra's* lack of understanding of the industrialization process was also debated, with some participants expressing dissatisfaction with the piecemeal approach: that is, tackling each problem in each sanctuary, be it mining or bamboo extraction, in isolation from others, and without considering wider trends and ramifications.

The self-evaluation of the *yatra* was, however, generally positive. It was considered to have been an important event, full of experiences, which should be followed up by devising strategies to bring together different grassroots organizations and radical platforms 'under one roof, with unity and common principles'. The need was felt to work towards ensuring a people's movement on conservation and to have 'links with other similar movements on water, forests and land', with the final objectives of 'forming a strong people's organization in the country and a composite people's plan on water, forests and land' (See Roy 1995). The end of the *yatra*, therefore, was considered to be the start of a long, and difficult road ahead.

### **Revisiting the Critical Discourse**

The optimistic note on which the *yatra* ended raises some questions regarding the future of conservation in India and the scope for resolution of natural resource conflicts around protected areas. It is now widely accepted that existing conservation policies cause resource conflicts. At

one level they have failed to yield the desired results—wildlife habitats over the years have dwindled and become degraded due to inefficient forest management and inability to resist industrial and commercial pressures. At another level, they have alienated local communities, depriving them of resources and therefore generating resource conflicts. Therefore, the conservation movement should attempt to reverse both the degradation process and the alienation of local communities. To succeed in meeting these twin objectives it is necessary to properly assess the clash between animal rights and human rights on the one hand and between industrial needs on the other. But the preconceived notion that rural communities are conservationist prevents effective intervention. The very fact that the *yatra* concluded with a series of policy recommendations<sup>25</sup> in which the state was assigned a crucial role underscores a tacit lack of faith in the local communities and the NGOs, and their ability to undertake conservation operations. There is a need to shed populism and to engage in community awareness and empowerment projects. To date, the new protagonists of conservation have only demonstrated their capability in raising community awareness. Given the undemocratic relationships between them and the local communities which was amply evident during the *yatra*, the empowerment project could well be a pipe dream.

In conclusion, it can be said that the *yatra*, in representing the recent trends within the conservation movement, exhibited both hope and concern. While it pointed out the hurdles blocking the resolution of conflicts over conservation it also highlighted the opportunities to resolve them. A major cause for concern revolves around the manner in which rural communities and their interests are projected. Unless the tendency to reify the grassroots is overcome, the new agents of the conservation movement are unlikely to become agents of change and empowerment, no matter how hopeful the prospect may seem in the beginning.

## NOTES

1. A national survey conducted in 1989 showed that about 70 per cent of the surveyed protected areas had people living within their boundaries and about 65 per cent of the areas were involved in leases, concessions and community rights. For more details see Kothari et al (1989).
2. A task force set up by the Indian Government in 1982 recommended a multiple use

zone in the PAs in which eco-development measures such as land and water conservation could be promoted.

3. The rather awkward but literal translation in English is 'Journey to Save Forests and Forest Lives'
4. The groups represented were Tarun Bharat Sangh based in Alwar district in Rajasthan, Maharashtra Arōgya Mandal based in Pune district in Maharashtra, Ekta Parishad from Madhya Pradesh, The Adivasi Ekta Vikas Mandal and the Center for Environment Education in Gujarat, Kalpavriksha from Delhi, the Bombay Natural History Society, and the Keoladeo Research Foundation from Bharatpur, Rajasthan.
5. The convoy also included a film crew that recorded the entire march—proceedings of meetings, press briefings—as well as the conditions of the protected sites, the wildlife therein and the ongoing activities inside the parks pertaining to conservation and deforestation. The crew also interviewed government officials, NGO activists and local community representatives.
6. For the purpose of this research the *yatra* was covered only till Bhimashankar. The participation in its proceedings was resumed again at Delhi, after the *yatris* left the Rajaji National Park.
7. The telling of the Sariska 'success story' generated a fair amount of comments and questions. Some environmentalists considered the preference for cash crops like mustard rather than food crops to be 'environmentally unfriendly'. Those familiar with government activities wanted to know if government departments, particularly of soil and water conservation, had been active in the area and, if not, for what reasons. Also the cost-effectiveness of the water conservation projects was briefly discussed. The water retention level of a project that the *yatris* visited was unimpressively low. It was suggested that since the project was new and initial retention is in the ground water regime, surface retention *appears* to be low for the first few seasons of rain.
8. Most of the Sangh staff hail from Meerut district in U. P. The *yatris* also visited some villages where the Sangh is active. Almost every house in the villages had slogans on women's education, community health and forest conservation painted on the walls.
9. The meeting also revealed the Gandhian values of the activists and environmentalists in the *yatra*.
10. Phoolwari ki Naal is situated only a few kilometres away from the Gujarat border.
11. According to M. D. Mistry of the labour union, about one lakh women are involved as labourers in the bidi sector. For collecting and plucking leaves they go out at 4 a. m. and wait until late at the night at collection centers to deliver their collect. The minimum wage rate is Rs. 34 per day in Gujarat.
12. Morari Bapu is famous for his *Ramkatha* recitals and hails from the Saurashtra region in Gujarat. He has the distinction of reciting the *katha* in unusual settings that include aircraft and ships. The Girnar forests would be yet another unique setting for him.
13. Patel's organization, the Arch Vahini, had been actively involved in the resettlement of the displaced population of Gujarat. Patel also claims that due to the intervention of Arch Vahini, the resettlement of the Gujarat oustees has been largely successful.
14. Sakri is situated 12 km from the SSP Dam site on the left bank of the river. On both banks, on the hilly terrain is a contiguous stretch of tribal habitat with a large Vasava population.
15. At Borivelli, the *yatra* was joined by representatives of social action groups from Karnataka—notable among which was Vikasana from Dharwad—who had wanted

- to organize similar journeys to the protected areas of the south. This group stayed with the *yatra* until it completed the Maharashtra leg.
16. The pioneering work on sacred groves in India is by Madhav Gadgil and Chandran (1992).
  17. A testimony to this effect was given in Ranthambore where an educated young man claimed to have brought wood worth Rs. 500 after having paid a bribe of Rs 50 on the excuse that he needed to cremate a body.
  18. The JFM schemes are also being undertaken on private revenue land.
  19. In fact, forest department officials openly admitted that they have made no attempt whatsoever to accommodate these sections. The DFO of the eastern division of the Bharuch-Dang Circle in Jara village, clearly stated that to attempt to integrate all the communities in the village is a futile exercise and one would only 'burn one's fingers' if such attempts were made.
  20. The kendu leaves are dried and used to roll tobacco for smoking.
  21. In Ranthambore, the *yatris* were asked by government officials to suggest ways in which the department can put in place a compensation scheme for crop damages.
  22. The range of actors who use this mode of campaigning is quite wide. At one level, mainstream political parties have used it to mobilize support for their politics. The Rath Yatra of the Bharatiya Janata Party, used for mobilizing support for building the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, is a good example. On the other hand, individual actors—politicians, philanthropists and social workers—have also undertaken such journeys. The Bharat Jodo Yatra of the noted social worker, Baba Amte, was undertaken to raise awareness on nation-building and national integrity.
  23. The simple vegetarian meals, the early morning prayers and the preference for politically correct music actually served to create the atmosphere of a pilgrimage.
  24. At one place, where some of the *yatris* had gathered for tea, a small group complained about the closure of mines in the area and asked if something could be done. When others present warned those who were complaining that the *yatra* was actually full of people instrumental in closing the mines, the topic of conversation, immediately thereafter changed to the benefits of mine closure for the local people!
  25. The following policy recommendations were made at the end of the *yatra*:
    - a. A clear and strict national policy which prohibits industrial, urban and commercial encroachment on protected areas, including a ban on denotifying protected areas for such purposes.
    - b. An official recognition of the legitimate resource rights and needs of local traditional communities and measures to meet these needs.
    - c. A central role for local communities in the planning, protection and monitoring of protected areas, including in the determination and enforcement of inviolate core zones and sustainable-use buffer zones.
    - d. Planning the management of protected areas based on a healthy interaction between formal ecological science and traditional knowledge, learning especially from traditional practices which have helped to conserve and promote sustainable use of natural resources.
    - e. Greater sharing of the benefits of the protected areas, including biomass rights, tourism income, employment in wildlife/forest related work and alternative livelihood opportunities (*JPM Update*, IIPA 1995).

## REFERENCES

- Gadgil, Madhav, and M. D. S. Chandran. 1992. 'Sacred Groves', in G. Sen (ed.). *Indigenous Vision: People of India*. Delhi: India International Centre.
- Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA). 1995. *JPM Update*. No. 3, March, Delhi.
- Kothari, A. et al. 1989. *Management of National Parks and Sanctuaries in India: A Status Report*. New Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA).
- Kothari, A. , S. Suri and N. Singh. 1995. 'Conservation in India: A New Direction.' *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 28: 2755-66.
- Roy, Dunu (ed.). 1995. *Proceedings of the Concluding Convention of the Yatra*. Raj Ghat, Delhi, 28 February 1995.
- Vijayan, V. S. 1987. *Keoldeo National Park Ecological Study*. Bombay: Bombay Natural History Society.

# **THE INFLUENCE OF INDIAN ISLAM ON FUNDAMENTALIST TRENDS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**Nasser Mustapha**

The term 'fundamentalism' was originally applied to a Protestant movement in the United States of America. Irving (1982: 7), talking about New England, which was founded by the Puritans in the early 17th century, notes: 'These Puritans were English fundamentalists in their interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and they placed great emphasis on free enquiry. They initiated universal instruction in the Western world so that each individual could understand the Bible by means of his own personal criteria.' According to Hess (1991: 408) fundamentalism represents a back to basics approach to religion, in the process resisting modernity and seeking to restore an original faith. The emphasis on returning to original sources, described by Hess (Ibid.) as new old-time religion, usually arises from disillusionment with prevailing beliefs, practices and interpretations, an approach not usually favoured by mainstream churches. In fact, Hess (Ibid.) indicates that in the United States, while the membership of mainstream Protestant denominations declined, that of independent fundamentalist sects rose sharply, and there was also a fundamentalist revival within Catholicism and Judaism.

Though not a new phenomenon, it is only recently that attention is being given to fundamentalist tendencies among Muslims. It was shortly after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, culminating in the overthrow of the Shah's regime and the spread of anti-Western sentiments among Muslims, that the term 'Islamic fundamentalism' came into vogue. In popular usage the term implies a reversion to the original teachings of Islam and carries overtones of fanaticism, intolerance and aggression. It also connotes resistance to the Western culture and lifestyle (Sivan 1992: 11; Hiro 1989: 3-20).

---

Nasser Mustapha is on the faculty of the Department of Sociology, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies.

---

Muslims in various parts of the world are today attempting to assert themselves, coming into conflict with the established legal, political and economic systems. Furthermore, controversies are being raised over issues, seemingly trivial in the eyes of the public, such as dress, food and male-female relationships (Ali 1991: 21). Since Islamic fundamentalists encounter conflict with mainstream religious practices, they are in a sense similar to the Protestant Christian fundamentalists described above. However, Islamic fundamentalists are themselves ultra-conservative, since they emphasize purity of doctrines and are suspicious of any form of religious innovation.

Much concern is being expressed nowadays over the rise of religious fundamentalism in various parts of the world. Even in the Land of Steelpan and Calypso, that is, Trinidad and Tobago, a group of extremist Muslims attempted unsuccessfully to overthrow the democratically elected government in July 1990 (Ryan 1991: 17). The reactions which this attempted coup elicited from the public in general and security officials in particular betrayed a lack of awareness of the various interpretations of Islam to be found in contemporary Trinidad and Tobago. There are hardly any works dealing with the Muslim migrants from India to the Caribbean islands (Smith 1963).

Trinidad and Tobago has a population of 1.2 million, 6 per cent of which are Muslims (Central Statistical Office 1990: 9). But whereas joint consideration of Hindus and Muslims may have sufficed in discussing the early East Indian<sup>1</sup> presence in the Caribbean (Clarke 1986; Klass 1961; Niehoff and Niehoff 1960), recent developments in the region and in the world at large, however, point to the need for a separate and careful study of Muslims.

One often notices a tendency towards a monolithic view of Muslims, including the fundamentalists among them. This article intends to dispel such a notion by demonstrating the variety of Islamic fundamentalisms that may co-exist in a religious community. Broadly, it is possible to distinguish between two types of reformist efforts in Islam. One is the aggressive and militant type, which is not only involved in proselytizing activities, but also attempts to establish the political system of Islam and implement the *Shariah* (Islamic law). The other is the non-militant type which, though basically involved in the spread of Islam, nevertheless confines itself to theological matters. In both cases, the ultimate



objective is to return to the original sources of Islam and hence can be described as fundamentalist.

This paper represents a preliminary attempt to grasp the trends and influences shaping the Muslim communities in the Caribbean. It begins by tracing the origins of Islamic fundamentalism among East Indian Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago. Section I identifies the fundamentalist-styled movements in India and some of the numerous interpretations of Islam that developed here. What is striking is the diversity that emerged among the followers of Islam even during this early period, a manifestation of the cultural diversity of Indian society. In Section II, the attempts to reform Islamic thought are discussed. In Section III, the discussion shifts to Islam in Trinidad and Tobago. In Section IV, the conflicts and divisions among the Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago are analyzed, and in Section V the origins of fundamentalist Islam in Trinidad is discussed, with the aim of showing the strong influence that India continues to exert upon these Muslims. In Section VI the historical development of Muslim organizations in Trinidad and Tobago are discussed, and Section VII concludes with some observations on the growing diversity of religious practices and interpretations in Islam in the Caribbean.

## I

From the 7th century onwards Islam spread rapidly from Arabia to various parts of the world. Contact with various cultures often led to the emergence of reinterpretations of the original teachings of the religion. Sporadic attempts to revert to the original form of Islam have met with varying degrees of success.

The formal introduction of Islam into India by an expedition led by Muhammad bin Qasim in AD 711 was not necessarily the first contact of Muslims with India (Herklots 1921: 4-5; Titus 1930: 12). There is a distinct possibility of such a contact as early as AD 664, only 32 years after the death of Muhammad. Through a series of conquests, particularly after the 11th century, Islam became a permanent element in Indian society. However Titus (1930: 12) indicates that Indian religious thought influenced Muslims before Islam became established in India. In fact, Buddhist thought and 'wandering Indian monks' too could have

significantly influenced the development of *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism) which occurred mainly in Persia (Titus 1930: 13).

Islam as established by Muhammad in Arabia is a monotheistic system with its unique belief system, institutionalized rituals, commands and prohibitions. Reinterpretations under different socio-cultural milieux are not unlikely, as confirmed by the evidence from India. The Sufi (the name derives from the word *tasawwuf*) sub-variant of Islam, in particular, found a fertile ground in India where ascetism and mystical activities already had widespread acceptance.

Conversion to Islam, notwithstanding the tenacity of the indigenous culture and the loss of contact with the homeland of Islam, led to the emergence of several syncretic forms among Muslims in India. In south India, for example, magical practices were combined with Muslim rituals. Thurston (1909: 231) reports that in Madras tribal rituals were incorporated into Muslim marriages. Quranic verses were assumed to possess special powers of healing and warding off evil, and hence were written on pieces of paper and stuck above doors and windows. With reference to north India, Herklots (1921: 7) observed that the Rajputs and Jats 'often supplement the orthodox ritual of Islam by Hindu marriage and death rites, follow Hindu rules of succession to real and personal property and particularly in times of trouble revere the local village deities'.

There was also a widespread belief that God can be better reached through some physical medium, and hence a system of saint and tomb worship evolved. Individuals with outstanding knowledge or allegedly superior powers came to be treated with awe and reverence by the masses. These 'saints' were perceived as being able to 'avert calamity, cure disease and procure children for the childless' (Ibid.: 7-8). Upon the death of these saints, their tombs were often worshipped by subsequent generations.

In attempting to illustrate the close relationship between Hindus and Muslims (in this case Shias) Herklots (Ibid.) reports that Hindus were involved in the procession of *taziyas* or *tabuts*, reminiscent of the martyrs Hassan and Hussein in the battle of Karbala during the festival of Muharram. Samaroo (1988: 5) also documents the influence of Hindu religious rituals upon the form this festival assumes in India.

## II

Periodically, there have been deliberate attempts to re-establish the orthodox version of Islam in India. Generally these efforts advocated a return to the original sources of the religion: the Quran and the Sunnah (practice and sayings of Muhammad) and the rejection of all forms of religious innovation. Of course, there is no consensus among Muslims as to what constitutes an innovation.

The view held by Titus (1930: 12) that 1804 marked the birth of Islamic fundamentalism or puritanism (later called Wahhabism) in India is not totally accurate. The efforts of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind (1563-1624) appear to be one of the earliest attempts at reforming Islamic religious thought in India (the Wahhabi movement started in Arabia around the middle of the 18th century). Shaikh Ahmad, born in the early days of Akbar's rule, was noted for his strong resistance to government policies. He criticized the prevailing forms of Sufism and envisaged a return to the fundamentals of Islam. His ideas were said to have later influenced Aurangzeb, Akbar's great grandson, born four years after his death. He is referred to in the literature as *Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani*, Reformer of the Second Millennium.

Another influential individual was Shah Waliullah of Delhi. His major preoccupation was the reformation of religious thought and as a result his efforts resulted in limited practical reforms. He advocated an independent view of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), as opposed to the four established schools of religious thought.

Among the militant and aggressive reformers were Sayyad Ahmad (1786-1831) and Shah Ismail Shahid (1779-1831). These two were actively engaged in reforming social affairs, becoming very influential on the north-western frontier. With reference to Sayyad Ahmad, Titus (1930: 47) says: 'The opponents of his sect, the orthodox Maulvis and others spoke of them derisively as Wahhabis (puritans/fundamentalists).' Maududi (1963: 27) also documents the continuing influence of these two individuals.

Around the beginning of the 19th century, Muslim influence began to decline in India, simultaneously with the growing dominance of the British. Initially, Muslims attempted a strong resistance to British influence by boycotting all British institutions. In fact, for many

decades, Hindus were more advanced than Muslims in education (Titus 1930: 50). The appearance of Sayyad Ahmad led to a dramatic turn of events. His policies favoured cordial relationships with the wider society, including the British. He introduced several drastic social and educational reforms and established what can be described as the modernist approach to Islam.

In the latter part of the 19th century Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian established another movement with strong modernist tendencies. His declaration of being a *mahdi* (reformer) and a prophet incurred the wrath of mainstream Muslims, who declared him an imposter and an agent of the British. His followers, referred to today as Qadianis and Ahmadis, are regarded as non-believers by orthodox Muslims.

Thus, towards the end of the 19th century, Islam in India was characterized by marked inter-regional and intra-regional diversity. Some of the following sub-variants of Islam in India are given below.

### **Hanafi Sunnis**

Hanafi Sunnis are those who follow Imam Abu Hanifa (699-767). This school appears to be the most accommodating and liberal of the four recognized schools of Islamic thought and is subscribed to by two-thirds of the Muslims in India and Pakistan (Titus 1930: 34). Several Sufi orders claim compatibility with this school of thought.

### **Sunnis with Wahhabi tendencies**

Sunnis with Wahhabi tendencies attempt to return to the original teachings of Islam as preached by Muhammad. Among them are the following groups:

*Ahl-i-Hadith* (People of the Traditions of the Prophet)

*Ahl-i-Quran* (People of the Quran)

*Faraidiyah* (those who follow the obligatory aspects of the religion)

*Ghair Mukallid* (non-conformists or those who do not conform to any one particular school of Muslim religious thought)

### **Shias**

The Shia Muslims strongly favour hereditary leadership. The Shia sect originated in Arabia after the passing away of Muhammad, when some

followers insisted that only members of the Prophets family should succeed him in leadership. Shias are to be found in small numbers in various parts of India. Some Shias practice Sufism.

### **Modernists**

Modernist Muslims are less rigid in implementing religious rituals. By modifying the original Islamic teachings, they attempt to make them compatible with the dominant value system. Qadianis and Ahmadis would be included in this group. Some Sunnis with modernist tendencies can also be found among this section of Muslims.

## **III**

Though evidence exists to indicate the presence of Muslims in Trinidad before the coming of East Indians to the Caribbean (Hamid 1978: 1; Quick 1990: 3-5), for the purposes of this paper the discussion commences with the arrival of East Indians to the Caribbean. Muslims were among the first shipment of indentured immigrants to arrive in the Caribbean in 1845 (Samaroo 1988: 1; Jha 1973: 3) The majority of Indian immigrants coming to the Caribbean were from the United Provinces (UP) and Bihar. According to the census of 1901, in UP there were 85 per cent Hindus and 14 per cent Muslims, while in Bihar there were 92. 7 per cent Hindus and 7. 3 per cent Muslims. Sources also indicate that in 1891 among Trinidad Indians there were 85. 9 per cent Hindus and 13. 44 per cent Muslims. These figures correspond to the proportions found in UP around the same time. In these areas, Hanafis were in the majority, but Shias and Wahhabis were also found (Titus 1930: 33).

The Indians who came to the Caribbean tried to recapture their religion as they knew it back in India, and to establish it under the new and challenging circumstances. They viewed the wider Creole society (evolving from African and European elements) with suspicion. They resisted its influence by holding tenaciously to their Islamic heritage. With limited resources, simple mosques were constructed, which served as places of worship, community centres, and *maktabs* (religious schools). Friday congregational prayers and the Urdu sermon used to be delivered in the *masjids* that were built. Community centres and *maktabs*

became the focal points of festivities for the community. Pressures from the wider society and common ancestral ties led to a generally cordial relationship between Muslims and Hindus. Despite differences in religious beliefs and occasional disagreements, there was mutual respect for each other. For both the Hindus and Muslims religion was crucial for their identity and the relationship between the two communities in the New World may have been even closer than in the motherland. According to Clarke (1986: 42) Muslims were more cohesive and less tolerant of Christianity than the Hindus. Being separated from their families back in India, religion served as a bond with their homeland during their supposedly temporary sojourn in this strange land. Religion gave their lives direction and a sense of completeness. With few books in their possession and not many educated persons among them, they tried to reconstruct their religious forms as closely as possible to the way they existed in India.

Khan (1987: 5) documents some aspects of Trinidad Muslim rituals that have been influenced by Hindu contact. These include the 'three day' and 'forty day' mourning functions (*mawlood* functions) and *neyaz* (an offering for the dead). Thus, reinterpretation of Islam under Hindu influence not only occurred in India but also in the New World. New elements were added which were perceived to be functional to their adherents under the circumstances. During the course of its evolution, the community reactivated and often modified various social events known in India. These provided opportunities for interaction among members of the community and served as important avenues for the socialization of the younger generation. As is the case with Indians in Trinidad and Tobago generally, the close-knit family system, an integral part of a wider kinship network, also strengthened communal solidarity.

An important Indian survival, the Hosay festival (from the name of Hussein), could be traced to some of the early immigrants. As mentioned earlier, it is quite likely that some Shia Muslims of UP and Bihar could have been among the early immigrants in Trinidad. This group reconstructed this festival in its Indian form. It has since been significantly influenced by the local carnival and today has acquired a unique identity.

Indian syncretism of Islam with magical practices was also transported to the Caribbean. In several communities, individuals

performed the 'medicine man' role. A well-known immigrant *maulvi* (religious leader or learned person) performed this service in Barataria (near the capital, Port of Spain) for many years. Today, a few Indian-trained *maulanas* function as exorcists in South and Central Trinidad. The *tabeej* (*taweez*) usually comprising some Arabic phrases inscribed on paper, presumably verses from the Quran, would be worn as an armlet for warding off evil spirits. Services such as fortune-telling, healing of ailments, solving problems and detection of thieves were also provided. During some life crises even today it is not uncommon for some Muslims to seek the services of a Hindu *pundit* (priest).

Sufism, another Indian Muslim survival, exists up to this day in Trinidad. The Sufi group, known locally as the *Halqa*, has its local leader who functions as the *pir* (spiritual guide) over his followers (*muridis*). The group is linked to a Grand Pir overseas and is engaged in mystical practices, which adopt an Indian form. The members of this group nevertheless claim to subscribe to the Hanafi school of thought.

The East Indian Muslims of Trinidad, despite minor theological differences, were largely united and maintained good relationships with their fellow Indians in order to successfully resist integration with the wider society. Smith (1963: 14) on the basis of studies conducted in Trinidad, concludes: 'To the present time, family organization and organized religion have engaged the forces of assimilation and acculturation and won.'

#### IV

In contemporary Trinidad and Tobago, 95 per cent of the Muslims (who constitute 6 per cent of the total population) are East Indians. Muslims experience more conflict and tension among themselves than with other religious denominations in the society. The mere existence of about 17 organizations and over 100 mosques—often located very close to each other—on the island is adequate testimony of the conflicts and schisms occurring over the years. Though originally established by mainstream organizations, the majority of mosques are attended by persons of other orientations. Today, one can identify the following major interpretations among the East Indians of Trinidad and Tobago: the traditionalists, the Tabligh Jamaat, the Wahhabi Sunnis, the Modernists and the Shias.

### **Traditionalists**

Traditionalists, by far the largest group, constitute about 50 per cent of the community, this proportion being a significant decrease from say 25 years ago. They claim to be Hanafī Sunnis and are theologically very similar to the movement founded by Ahmad Riza Khan (of Barelwi) in late 19th century India (Sanyal 1996). They subscribe to practices and observances such as *mawlood*, *tazeem*, Three Days, Forty Days and *neyaz*. Great emphasis is given to praying for the deceased; death anniversaries of saints are often observed. They look down upon Muslims who do not observe these traditions and call them Wahhabis or Deobandis. They are suspicious of interpretations of Islam which differ from their own, and censure foreign missionaries. They are highly insular and there is a notable lack of desire to propagate their faith.

### **Tabligh Jamaat**

The Tabligh Jamaat group is much smaller than the traditionalists (about 15 per cent of the community) but all its members are highly active. Mosques are the focal point of their programmes, though their members are marginalized in certain mosques. They also claim to be Hanafī Sunni but in practice are opposed to most of the traditions outlined above, describing them as innovations. Their leaders, trained in India, have adopted a literal approach to the understanding of the sacred texts, giving great importance to emulating the model of the Prophet's life in minute detail. They isolate themselves, adopt a passive approach to social and political issues and avoid conflict with established authority. Nevertheless, their rigid stance on many issues often contributes to their unpopularity among both traditionalists and fundamentalists. Their efforts at spreading the message of their faith are confined to the Muslim community.

### **Wahhabi Sunnis**

Wahhabi Sunnis constitute about 25 per cent of the community, a proportion which has grown significantly over the past two decades. They generally show high levels of religious commitment. Originally inspired by movements in the sub-continent and more recently by Middle Eastern and North American contact, they are often at odds with the traditionalists over their apparent over-emphasis on ancestor



traditions as opposed to the *faraaid* (obligatory) acts of worship. Many of the groups in this category actively engage in propagating their faith both among Muslims and non-Muslims. Generally, members of this group do not follow the rulings of any one of the four schools of thought (*mazhab*) and some find *ijtihad* (the exercise of judgement in the implementation of Islamic law) acceptable.

### **Modernists**

Modernists are the ones who claim to be Sunnis and many among these give modern interpretations of the texts. They come largely from the middle classes and wear Western style clothes. The men avoid beards and the women seldom wear the *hijaab* (veil). They place a high value on Western education mainly because of the prestige it brings. They often frown upon the rigidity of both the fundamentalist Sunnis and Tabligh Jamaat and to a great extent are indifferent to the practices of the traditionalists, confining Islamic rituals to weddings, funerals and special occasions.

### **Shias**

Though Shi-ites were reported among the early immigrants from India, it is only over the last 10 years that they have become organized into a separate group with their own mosque. The group is very small (less than one per cent of the community), has a foreign missionary and attempts, often unsuccessfully, to persuade other Muslims to join their fold. Their followers, largely of African descent, nevertheless find comfort and solace in the group, probably due to the solidarity existing within and their disenchantment with other groups.

Comparing Indian Islam to Middle Eastern Islam, Samaroo (1988: 7) observes: 'In modern-day Trinidad and Guyana where there are substantial Muslim populations, there is much confusion, often conflict, between these two types of Islam'. Ryan (1991: 29) also shares similar views.

Conflicts arising from different interpretations of Islam are endemic among Trinidad Muslims. However, evidence shows that these different interpretations have come mainly through continuous contact with India. The influence of the Middle East on Trinidad Muslims would have only been significant in the last decade or so, and its influence is much less in

comparison to the influence of Islam from India. As mentioned earlier, fundamentalist Islam appeared in India about two centuries before the Wahhabi movement in Arabia. In addition, many sub-variants of Islam evolved among the Muslims of India which inevitably manifested themselves in the New World. So significant is India to Trinidad Muslims, that there is a saying among the latter that 'the Quran was revealed in Arabia, recited in Egypt and practised in India.' After the 1977 Islamic Conference sponsored by the Arab-based Muslim World League (RABITA), the Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jammat Association (ASJA) and its affiliating organizations were appointed as the representatives of traditional Indian Muslims who do not subscribe to the Middle Eastern Islam.

## V

### **Sunni/Qadiani Conflict**

Towards the end of the 19th century, bitter conflicts that developed in India between the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and orthodox Muslims came to the surface in Trinidad with the arrival of Maulana Durrani in Trinidad in 1921. Pressures from Syed Abdul Aziz and other local Muslims led to his departure in 1923. Durrani nevertheless persuaded a Trinidadian, Ameer Ali, to pursue studies at an Ahmadi institute in Lahore (Samaroo 1987: 30). Ameer Ali returned as probably the first formally qualified local *maulvi* in Trinidad. Gradually, Ameer Ali's interpretation intensified doctrinal conflicts which persist to this day. Ameer Ali adopted what was then seen as a modernist approach to religion (like encouraging free participation of women in religious activities). This did not go down well with the orthodox sections of the Muslim community and pressures from them forced Ameer Ali to form his own organization called the Trinidad Muslim League (the TML, named after the All India Muslim League). The TML was formed on August 15, 1947 (Pakistan Day) and has given its main mosque the name Jinnah Memorial Mosque (Rajeek 1954), after Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. In the late 1960s, the TML became formally linked with the Ahmadi movement. Since 1976, however, the league has formally abandoned its earlier Ahmadi affiliation and declares itself to be *ghair mukallid* (non-conformist).

### **Beginnings of Wahhabism**

The arrival of Nazeer Ahmad Simab in Trinidad in June 1935 probably represents the introduction of fundamentalist Islam in the country. He left his 'well-paying job' in the Punjab to come to Trinidad as a missionary on the advice of his group Khuddam-i-Islam (Servants of Islam). His ideas often led to conflicts with the local Muslim community, particularly with the ASJA. Through a retail store he financed his missionary work, which included taking classes, and bringing out numerous publications in Urdu and English. Local leaders such as Haji Ruknudeen, the *qazi* (literally, judge) of Trinidad labelled him and his followers as Wahhabis, not unlike the experiences of Sayyad Ahmad of India in the early 19th century.

Simab made significant contributions in the field of education, being instrumental in establishing the first non-Christian denominational school in the colony in 1942. He was also successful in having Captain Daniel, the then Deputy Director of Education in the colony, delete certain anti-Islamic statements from history textbooks (see *Muslim Standard*, December 1975: 8). Simab passed away in December 1942 and was buried in El Socorro, Trinidad. A few of his followers, some of whom are still alive today, expressed their familiarity with this interpretation of Islam when other fundamentalists later arrived on the scene.

### **Pasha**

Another Indian missionary reported to have had the most significant impact on Trinidad Muslims was Syed Husein Saqqaf, also known as Pasha. He was originally from Madras and was assigned to the Islamic Missionaries Guild in the late 1960s. He strongly advocated that Muslims should return to the original sources of Islam, refrain from confining religion to the mosque and adopt it as a complete way of life. Pasha faced severe opposition from the local Muslims and his activities were outlawed by mainstream organizations, such as the ASJA and the Takveeat-ul-Islamic Association (TIA). They described him as a Wahhabi out to create disunity among the Muslims.

It is reported that in a youth camp held by the Islamic Missionaries Guild in December 1970, Pasha came into conflict with Hisham Badran (a Jordanian) because of the latter's liberal interpretation of Islam. Pasha

attracted some educated persons from various parts of Trinidad and trained them intensively in reading Arabic, in Quranic studies, and familiarized them with the *Hadith* (sayings of Muhammad) and the *Sirah* (life history of Muhammad). Pasha introduced to Trinidad books written by Maulana Maududi, founder of the Jamaat-i-Islami party, a religio-political movement with branches in India and Pakistan. Thousands of copies of *Towards Understanding Islam* have been printed locally and are used as the basic text in Islamic classes. The followers of Pasha themselves started small courses in various parts of the country and made attempts at religious propagation. After his departure in 1974, they continued to meet on a regular basis to study Islam.

### **Tabligh Jamaat**

This group, founded in India by Muhammad Ilyas, advocates a rigid system of routine adherence to the fundamentals of Islam. Members read a restricted range of books, refrain from polemics and adopt a mechanical, literal and often dogmatic approach to religion. Among all the fundamentalist efforts in Trinidad, the Tabligh Jamaat has the strongest connections with India. Several of its members still attend four-month training programmes in India. Also, many Trinidadians have obtained scholarships to pursue Islamic studies at the Dar-ul-Ulum Institute in Bangalore. Some have returned qualified as *maulanas* (scholars) and one person as a *mufti* (religious jurist). On his return to these shores, Mufti Shabil Ali established a Dar-ul-Ulum in Central Trinidad, patterned on the institute in India. The curriculum and methods of instruction (though now through the medium of the English language) have not changed much. Even its use of the compounds as classrooms in the isolated rural community of Cunupia, Trinidad, reminds one of India.

The Tabligh Jamaat strongly opposes Western sartorial styles for both males and females. It favours the use of many Urdu expressions instead of English ones. This group today has a significant international influence, especially among the Indian diaspora groups.

### **Islamic Trust**

In mid-1975 Abdul Wahid Hamid, an Indo-Trinidadian historian, formed the Islamic Trust in which he was joined by the former associates of Pasha. His interpretation of Islam was similar to Pasha's, although his

methodology was somewhat different. Hamid, however, had never met Pasha. For fear of being perceived as divisive, founders of the trust never intended to form a separate Muslim organization, but functioned as a service bureau and as 'catalysts' in the Muslim community. The trust established a reference library and a bookshop and held classes at various venues throughout the country. It published numerous books and brought out a monthly magazine called *Muslim Standard*. The trust forcefully expressed itself over a number of social and political issues, leading the then prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr Eric Williams, to comment that the Muslims had become aggressive in their missionary activity (Hamid 1978: 4). The publication was eventually banned from mosques controlled by mainstream organizations, mainly on account of its scathing criticisms of Kamaluddin Mohammed, a minister and leader of the traditional Muslim community. The Nur-e-Islam Mosque Board, of which Mohammed was the chairman, issued a statement in the *Trinidad Guardian* stating that the *Muslim Standard* was the product of 'a few recalcitrant young Muslims' and does not represent the views of the Muslim community.

Hamid nevertheless considered himself part of the traditional Muslim community. He taught history at the ASJA (the country's largest Muslim organization) Boys' College, held Arabic classes at various ASJA mosques and schools and even delivered a paper on the invitation of ASJA at its Teachers Conference in late 1976.

Since Pasha's time, the group had attracted many persons of African descent to Islam. In February 1977 the Afro-American leader of the IPNA (Islamic Party in North America), Muzaffar-ud-Din Hamid, came to Trinidad as a guest of ASJA. Muzaffar-ud-Din delivered public lectures at various venues including the ASJA Boys' College and the ASJA mosque in Port of Spain. He then held several private meetings with the associates of the trust (as they preferred to be called) and discussed the constitution of the IPNA with them. He pointed out that the trust was merely functioning as a 'reformist group' rather than as a 'revolutionary' one and that social change was proceeding at too slow and gradual a pace with their methods of functioning. Instead of concentrating their efforts on reforming a 'decadent Muslim community', they were urged to work towards the establishment of a new Islamic society. This brought about a split, with the majority of the

African members leaving the trust and forming the Islamic Party of the Caribbean.

The Islamic Party acquired a large building in Laventille, a depressed suburb of the capital (Port of Spain), which was used both as a mosque and living quarters for its members. In 1982, this group eventually joined forces with two other Afro-based groups to form the Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen (the group which attempted to overthrow the elected government in July 1990). The trust, considerably weakened by this turn of events, nevertheless continued its work. In late 1977, Abdul Wahid returned to London and continued to write and publish his views of Islam.

Evolving out of the Islamic Trust was the Islamic Dawah Movement, a more formalized body with registered members and a constitution. A number of other smaller groups evolved from the trust, including the Muslim Youth Brigade, the North-Eastern Muslim Youths, and Iqra Productions (Ali 1991: 29). A handful of trust associates, probably inspired by events in Iran, adopted the Shi-ite interpretation of Islam. They sometimes pray at the regular mosques, but operate in isolation from other Muslims. A few Shi-ites are said to be linked to the Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen.

## VI

Ali (1991) in a thesis outlining the historical development of Muslim organizations in Trinidad and Tobago, observes that there are two federated groups of Muslim organizations: the Muslim Coordinating Council (MCC) and the United Islamic Organizations (UIO). The MCC consists of three better established groups incorporated by acts of parliament; that is, the ASJA, the TIA and the TML, whereas the UIO is made up of 13 smaller and recently established groups, not having the same legal status as incorporated bodies. The 13 UIO groups are: Dar ul Ulum, Iqra Productions, Islamic Dawah Movement, Islamic Funeral Services Trust, Islamic Missionaries Guild, Islamic Trust, Islamic Resource Society, Islamic Housing Cooperative, Muslim Credit Union, Muslim Youth Brigade, North Eastern Muslim Youth, Tobago Muslim Association and University of the West Indies Islamic Society. The Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen has left the UIO while the Majlis-ul-Ulama is no

longer functional. Compared to the UIO groups, the MCC is conservative and has cordial relations with the state. Its groups have (or had, as is the case with the TIA) larger memberships and their leadership consists of middle-class businessmen or professionals. They own most of the property in the Muslim community, mainly schools and mosques. The rank and file of these groups do not generally display high levels of commitment. The ASJA and TIA are Hanafis, but the TML is *ghair mukallid*. The majority of the members of the MCC groups are East Indians. The traditional women's garb, the *hijab*, is worn by a relatively small percentage of their followers and polygamy is generally unacceptable among them.

The TIA, founded in 1927, is the oldest of the three organizations, with five primary schools and three mosques under its control. This group has been largely inactive over the years (Kasule 1986: 11), but has been recently attempting to resurface with some success. Both the ASJA and the TML were originally part of the TIA (Samaroo 1987: 9).

The ASJA was founded in 1936, when differences occurred over the then leader of the TIA, Moulvi Ameer Ali, who was described by some members as an Ahmadi. ASJA has since grown into the largest and most influential Muslim organization in Trinidad and Tobago. It represents the orthodox, conservative Hanafi Muslims and supports practices such as *mawlood* (celebration of the Prophet's birthday). ASJA has always maintained a strong link with India and Pakistan, mainly through scholars such as Maulana Ansari and Maulana Siddiqi. Over the years some members of ASJA have been associated with the local Sufi Halqa.

In 1947, Ameer Ali and his followers left the TIA and formed the TML. The group had been ostracized for a number of years by the Trinidad Muslims, mainly due to its Ahmadi affiliations. Since 1976, the Council of the TML voted in favour of severing links with the Ahmadi movement. To this day, the TML represents the *ghair mukallids* or non-conformists. Over the years the TML has been the most liberal of the Muslim groups in the country (with the exception of the Ahmadi Anjuman which evolved more recently). It strongly encourages women to seek education and to participate at all levels of the organization. It has five schools under its control and has an impressive record of achievements in the field of education.

Table 1: Muslim Organizations in Trinidad and Tobago

## Muslim Coordinating Council (MCC)

Organization	Per cent*	Official Orientation	Current Orientation
ASJA	35	Hanafi Sunni	Traditionalist/Modernist
TIA	10	Non-sectarian	Traditionalist/Modernist
TML	15	Ghair-Mukallid	Non-conformist/Modernist

## United Islamic organizations (UIO)

Organization	Per cent*	Official Orientation	Current Orientation
Tabligh/Dar-ul-Ulum	15	Hanafi Sunni	Hanafi Sunni
Islamic Missionaries Guild MCU (Outside MCC)	5 7	Wahhabi Open	Wahhabi/Traditionalist Sunni with Wahhabi tendencies
IDM/IRS	5	Wahhabi	Wahhabi
Others**	8	Wahhabi/Open	Wahhabi/Traditionalist

\* The figures are approximate and based upon unstructured interviews, documentary evidence and attendance at various programmes.

\*\* Includes North Eastern Muslim Youth, Muslim Youth Brigade, Islamic Housing Cooperative, Islamic Funeral Services Trust, Iqra Productions, Islamic Trust, Tobago Muslim Association and UWI Islamic Society.

The TML does not confine itself to any one of the four recognized schools of Islamic law and believes in the exercise of *ijtihad*; nor does it subscribe to some of the traditional practices sanctioned by the ASJA but the relationship between them is nevertheless very cordial. Both orientations, namely, *ahmadiyah* and *ghair mukallid*, found within the TML over the years, are of Indian origin.

Groups that constitute the UIO are generally more fundamentalist in orientation and have often been critical of established institutions. These groups have smaller memberships (with the exception of the Muslim Credit Union) drawn mainly from the youth. Apart from the Islamic Missionaries Guild and Dar-ul-Ulum, these groups do not own much property and most members display high levels of religious commitment. Members do not generally subscribe to certain traditional practices of the ASJA and the TIA.

Though the UIO groups have agreed to 'cooperate on the basis of righteousness', much diversity exists among them with respect to interpretation of religion. Unique among them is the Dar-ul-Ulum



Institute (outlined earlier), which is rigidly Hanafi in its orientation, but differs from the ASJA or TIA Hanafis. The Islamic Dawah Movement, North-Eastern Muslim Youths, Muslim Youth Brigade and Iqra Productions have all evolved from the Islamic Trust and are similar in their interpretation of religious matters. They can be classified as Wahhabis (as defined earlier). The Islamic Missionaries Guild, though evolving from the ASJA, is officially Wahhabi but contains vestiges of traditionalism. The UWI Islamic Society is a transient student body and does not have a clear ideological position. The Islamic Funeral Services Trust, Islamic Housing Cooperative, Iqra Productions and the Muslim Credit Union are service oriented groups that cater to all Muslims. The Tobago Muslim Association contains both Wahhabi and traditionalist elements. Finally, the Majlis-al-Ulama, a forum for Islamic scholars to discuss matters affecting the community has not been functional lately.

The Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen, an organization consisting of over 90 per cent Afro-Trinidadian members is a Wahhabi institution. Its militant, aggressive and uncompromising approach puts it apart from all the other groups. In fact, although the Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen has found acceptability as an orthodox Muslim body, its involvement in the attempted coup of July 1990 has been vociferously condemned by all local Muslim groups outlined above, including the 'more radical' UIO groups ( Ryan 1991: 68). In fact, this group was forced to resign from the UIO in March 1994. It operates independently of all other Muslim organizations. Some former members of the Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen have formed the Islamic Resource Society. the IRS, which joined the UIO in 1995 and the Islamic Housing Cooperative in 1996 .

## VII

As we have seen Indian interpretations of Islam continue to exert a significant influence upon the Muslims, belonging to both traditional and fundamentalist groups in Trinidad and Tobago. Though the influence of the Middle East has been growing over the past decade it is still not as strong as the Indian influence.

Close and continuous contact of East Indian Muslims has contributed to the growing diversity of religious practices and interpretations in Islam. Further, even the conflicts that characterize interpretations of

Islam in India have been carried over to the Caribbean. The visits of a number of missionaries from India and Pakistan have contributed significantly to the emergence of numerous schisms and fissions among the local Muslim groups.

Among the two major groups of Muslim organizations in Trinidad and Tobago, the UIO is more fundamentalist. The fundamentalist groups are weaker in both membership and control of resources, but are more active in proselytizing activities. They are more vociferous on matters that affect Muslims and are more likely to come into conflict with established authority. Their women generally wear traditional Muslim garb (*hijab*) and free mixing of the sexes is not encouraged. They generally demonstrate equality of the sexes, with the exception of the Tabligh movement in which there is a tendency to relegate women to an inferior, domesticated status. Though all fundamentalist groups regard polygamy as permissible on account of its religious sanction, it is widely practised only among members of the Afro-based Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen and the India-based Tabligh movement.

Contact between Trinidad Muslims and the Middle East have increased over the past decade mainly through the influence of Arab trained scholars. About 20 youngsters left these shores to pursue studies at universities in Saudi Arabia; some of them have already qualified. In comparison, approximately four times that number went to India on scholarships to pursue Islamic studies at Bangalore, Deoband and Aligarh. India still constitutes the preferred destination of the majority of Islamic scholars from Trinidad and Tobago.

### NOTE

1. The term 'East Indian' refers to migrants from India. It is popularly used in the local literature for differentiating their group from other 'Indians' in the West, such as 'West Indians' and 'American Indians'.

### REFERENCES

- Akhtar, K. B. and A. H. Sakr. 1982. *Islamic Fundamentalism*. Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Igram Press.
- Ali, F. 1991. *A Historical Development of Muslim Organizations in Trinidad and Tobago*. Caribbean Studies (BA) Thesis, UWI, St. Augustine.
- Central Statistical Office. 1990. *Population and Housing Census 1990*. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: Government Printery.
- Clarke, C. G. 1986. *East Indians in a West Indian Town*. London: Allen and Unwin.

- Hamid, A. W. 1978. 'Muslims in the West Indies'. Paper presented to the Muslim Minorities Seminar, Islamic Council of Europe.
- Hess, B. , E. Markson and P. Stein. 1991. *Sociology*. New York: MacMillan.
- Herklots, G. A. 1931. *Islam in India*. London: Kurzon Press.
- Hiro, D. 1989. *Holy Wars: The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism*. New York: Routledge.
- Irving, T. B. 1982. 'Foreword', in K. B. Akhtar and A. H. Sakr. *Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp. 7-14. Iowa: Igram Press.
- Jha, J. C. 1973. 'The Indian Heritage in Trinidad' in J. La Guerre, *From Calcutta to Caroni*, pp. 3-22. Trinidad: Longman Caribbean.
- Kasule, O. H. 1986. 'Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago'. *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 7 (1): 195-224.
- Khan, F. 1987. 'Islam as a Social Force in the Caribbean'. Paper presented to the Conference of the History Teachers Association of Trinidad and Tobago, June 1987.
- Klass, M. 1961. *East Indians in Trinidad*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Maududi. S. A. A. 1963. *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*. Lahore: Islamic Publications.
- Muslim Standard*. 1975. 3 (December): 10-11.
- Niehoff, A. and J. Niehoff. 1960. *East Indians in the West Indies*. Milwaukee, USA: Milwaukee Public Museum Publications in Anthropology, No. 6.
- Quick, A. H. 1990. *Deeper Roots: Muslims in the Caribbean before Columbus to the Present*. Nassau, Bahamas: AICCLA.
- Rafeek, M. 1954. *A History of Islam and Muslims in Trinidad*. Trinidad Muslim League Inc. , commemorative brochure.
- Rizvi, G. A. A. 1965. *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, Agra: Agra University.
- Ryan, S. 1991. *The Muslimeen Grab for Power: Race, Religion and Revolution in Trinidad and Tobago*. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: Inprint Caribbean Ltd.
- Samaroo, B. 1987. 'The Indian Connection: The Influence of Indian Thought and Ideas on East Indians in the Caribbean', in D. Dabydeen, and B. Samaroo. *India in the Caribbean*, pp. 25-59 London: Hansib Publishing Ltd.
- . 1988 . 'Early African and East Indian Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago'. Paper presented at a conference on Indo-Caribbean History and Culture, University of Warwick, May 1988.
- Sanyal, U. 1996. *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi and His Movement 1870-1920*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Sivan, E. 1992. 'Radical Islam', in A. Giddens, *Human Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Smith, R. J. 1963. *Muslim East Indians in Trinidad: Retention of Ethnic Identity Under Acculturative Conditions*. Unpublished Ph. D Thesis, University of Pennsylvania.
- Thurston, M. 1909. *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*. 7 Vols. Madras: Christian Literature Society.
- Titus, M. T. 1930. *Islam in India and Pakistan*. Madras: Christian Literature Society.

**Contributions to Indian**

**Sociology** is guided by the firm belief that sound ethnography no less than textual scholarship, if not more than it, is the solid foundation on which the sociology of India must rest.

The journal presents a diversity of theoretical approaches to the study of society in India. It provides a forum for divergent views on Indian society, believing that differences of approach are born of genuine scholarly concerns. It is a platform for the major figures in the field.

**RECENT ARTICLES**

- **C J FULLER** Religious Texts, Priestly Education and Ritual Action in South Indian Temple Hinduism
- **S SELVAM** Secularisation in Hindu Temples: The Implication for Caste
- **CHARLES W NUCKOLLS** Fathers and Daughters in a South Indian Goddess Myth: Cultural Ambivalence and the Dynamics of Desire
- **MEENA KHADELWAL** Ungendered *Atma*, Masculine Virility and Feminine Compassion: Ambiguities in Renunciant Discourses on Gender
- **DULALI NAG** Little Magazines in Calcutta and a Postsociology of India

**Contributions to Indian Sociology****Editors**

**VEENA DAS**, *Delhi School of Economics*

**DIPANKAR GUPTA**, *Jawaharar Nehru University and*

**PATRICIA UBEROI**, *Institute of Economic Growth*

Biannual  
May, November

**SAGE Publications**

Post Box 4215, New Delhi 110 048  
2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, California 91320  
6 Bonhill Street, London EC2A 4PU

## Book Reviews

A. M. Shah, B. S. Baviskar and E. A. Ramaswamy (eds). 1997. *Social Structure and Social Change*, Volume 4. *Development and Ethnicity*. Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. 300. Rs. 325

This volume is the fourth of the series of five on social structure and social change in honour of Professor M. N. Srinivas, one of the founders of Social Anthropology in India. The volume has 10 papers in all: of these the first five examine processes of development in different parts of India and the last three focus on issues related to ethnicity. Two papers—one by Chitra and S. S. Sivakumar and the other by T. K. Oommen discuss the methodological issues in the study of the process of development.

Kolenda's study of Kanyakumari shows how in the process of land transfers, bureaucrats, chit-fund operators and excise officers cheated the illiterate villagers, who were ultimately the losers in all the land transactions. David Mandlebaum's comparative study of the Toda tribe and the Kerala State describes how the process of development has influenced the two areas differently. Todas have remained more or less unaffected by the process of modernization and development whereas the state of Kerala has made sure and steady progress. To quote 'They (Todas) have learnt to use modern political processes to maintain tribal unity and culture.' Kerala, in contrast, has made remarkable progress in the areas of economic and industrial growth.

G. S. Aurora in his very insightful study of Arunachal Pradesh reveals the impact of development in an ecologically balanced tribal society. He points out that in the name of economic development considerable deforestation has occurred in the state. A new class structure is also emerging in a society which was till recently egalitarian in outlook. Aurora can foresee disaster if planners and policy makers do not check the adverse affects of development in this region.

In his paper 'Milk and Sugar', B. S. Baviskar compares the politics of sugar cooperatives in Maharashtra with dairy cooperatives in Gujarat. He shows why politicians are playing a decisive role in sugar

cooperatives and not in dairy cooperatives in Gujarat. He analyses the role of organization, income, nature of dominant caste, technology infrastructure for marketing and foreign aid as decisive factors shaping the politics of cooperatives in the two states.

In their study of 'Rural Change, Social History and Participant Observation', Chitra and S. S. Sivakumar have focused their attention on methodological issues in studying changes in rural society. They have emphasized the importance of historical data and participant observation for a better and more insightful understanding of changing rural society. The authors also recommend that historians use the method of participant observation to study the past through the present and advocate that social anthropologists should use the historical method to study the present through the past.

T. K. Oommen's paper 'Social Movements and State Response: The Indian Situation,' provides a broad frame-work within which to understand social movements in India. Oommen emphasizes the importance of the environmental milieu—often overlooked by scholars—within which social movements operate. The environmental milieu, according to Oommen, would include the nature of the state, ideology and even the values of the society within which social movements are organized.

B. K. Roy Burman, who has been closely associated with the study of backward castes and classes, tries to highlight in his paper, the problems involved in identifying 'Backward Classes' movements and also makes projections of their representation in the government services.

The last three papers, by S. C. Dube, Viswanathan Selvarathnam and Shachichidanda examine different aspects of ethnicity. Dube highlights the theoretical issues. He tries to identify the important of different factors for the formation of ethnic identity. According to Dube '... ethnicity is part sentiment, part ideology and part agenda'. Selvarathnam attempts to analyse ethnic conflicts in India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. He considers the British policy of divide and rule as the most important single factor contributing to ethnic violence and its escalation in recent years. He also suggests measures to combat ethnic violence in the three societies.

Sachichidananda looks at the problem and growth of ethnicity in the Chotangapur region of Bihar. According to him, cultural arrogance,

domination and exploitation by the majority community accompanied by a sense of insecurity by the minority community are the major causes for the growth of ethnicity among local tribals. Sachichidananda also brings out the positive dimensions of ethnicity by showing how the growth of ethnicity has helped the Santals in identifying and pursuing their cultural and political goals.

This volume should be an essential reading for all those (teachers and students) interested in understanding the complex phenomena of development and ethnicity in India. For planners, NGOs and all those committed to helping India march forward as a secular and developed nation, this book is a very important starting point. But one wishes that there were a few articles bringing out the interlinkages between development and ethnicity—so essential to the understanding of these two complex and interrelated processes in contemporary Indian society.

**Mohini Anjum**

Department of Sociology  
Jamia Millia Islamia  
New Delhi

Archana Ghosh and Sami S Ahmad. 1996. *Plague in Surat: Crisis in Urban Governance*. New Delhi: Concept Publications. Pp. 241. Rs. 200.

This book brings to light the shortcomings of urban governance in Surat in the context of the outbreak of the plague epidemic in September 1994. It is the fifth among the urban studies series, and reports the study conducted by the Institute of Social Sciences and funded by Friedrich Ebert Foundation. In the first chapter the authors introduce the readers to the study, by giving a precise sketch of its area of focus, objectives, methods and sources. The second and third chapters give a description of the study area, that is the city of Surat. These chapters are packed meticulously with statistical evidence. The fourth chapter is mainly a discussion of the paradoxes of an industrially advanced city and its poor living conditions. The final chapter brings together the findings of the study and discusses strategies to avoid the outbreak of a similar epidemic in the future. The presentation of the historical evolution and regional significance of Surat, though not essential, builds the

context of the study. The demographic and economic profile of the city provide us the available information on the highly populated and industrialized city of Surat. Large-scale migration of workers into the city has created congestion and inadequacy of basic amenities. Accumulation of industrial waste, piling up of garbage, and air pollution are also consequences of the runaway industrialization of the city.

The study takes an interesting turn when it focuses on the major programmes initiated by the municipal corporation and the urban development authority of Surat to achieve 'better environmental living conditions' for the citizens in the 'most economic way' and to locate 'new employment and pollution centres' at convenient places with transport facilities. These targets were, according to the study, well defined but hardly reached. The study proves that there are other reasons apart from the industrial development and its consequent population growth for such an occurrence. One of the major reasons according to the authors is the 'mixed land use pattern'. There is no single residential area free from such mixed land usage in the city. This has increased the density of the population in the core area—the 'walled city' — and hindered the even distribution of population in Surat.

The high density of population in the walled city of Surat is unrelieved by new housing colonies in the periphery of the city because the houses there remain unoccupied for want of essential facilities. The proliferation of slums and migrant workers' colonies also put pressure on the infrastructure of essential sanitation and public health facilities. Hence Surat is vulnerable to the spread of communicable and water borne diseases.

The authors deliberate upon the absence of an elected local body and the ensuing political instability, the administrative problems, lack of finance, the growing strength of the builders' lobby and corruption as the major reasons for the pathetic living conditions of the city. They also highlight the apathy of the citizens and the weaknesses of non-governmental organizations and workers' unions as the main contributory factors for the absence of effective peoples' mobilization to rectify the situation.

The study's major contribution is its search beyond industrial development and the consequent population growth of Surat as reasons for the outbreak of the plague epidemic. It points to organizational



problems and lack of effective urban governance as the major contributory factors to the deterioration of the public health situation in Surat.

**K. Lavanya**

Centre for the Study of Social Systems,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi

Arup Maharatna. 1996. *The Demography of Famines: An Indian Historical Perspective*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. 317. Rs. 545.

The book under review emerges from the doctoral work done by the author. It provides a good understanding of the demographic responses to Indian famine conditions in a historical perspective. The study presents detailed analysis of four major Indian famines, that is, the famines of 1896-97, 1899, 1908 and 1943-44.

In considering demographic effects of famines the author makes a distinction between the short-term and long-term demographic responses. Most of the short-term demographic responses to famine conditions are biological in nature whereas long-term responses are viewed as behavioural.

The major assumptions are that during famines, increased mortality and reduced fertility are two short-term responses involving population loss while the post-famine period experiences lower death rate and higher birth rate leading to a subsequent spurt in population growth. Increase in mortality during famines occurs because of the effect of acute undernutrition on morbidity and mortality. The social disruption caused by famines leads to the breakdown of sanitation facilities which in turn contribute to the spread of epidemic diseases and consequently to increased mortality.

Acute undernutrition and psychological stress associated with the crisis reduces the fertility level. Reduction in the frequency of intercourse owing to decline in libido, general physical weakness and spousal separation consequent upon the temporary migration of males, and postponement of marriages also contribute to the decline in fertility.

Thus this crisis may result in birth control efforts through abstention, induced abortion or contraception.

The migration response to famines depends more on particular circumstances such as outmigration from famine affected areas during famine and a return migration afterwards due to the availability of food or work in nearby areas.

The study draws its data from vital registration which is collected by illiterate village watchmen. It is a well-known fact that vital statistics are not reliable and suffer from various deficiencies; more so during crisis situations when the extent of under reporting is generally high. The author seems conscious of the deficiencies of these statistics and therefore, has provided lower and upper estimates and compared them with data available from other sources.

Most of the earlier studies on famine view it as a demographic crisis dealing mostly with mortality effects. However the demographic impact of famines is rarely restricted to mortality. It is a syndrome of multiple interacting factors, as stated by Chen and Chowdhury involving all the three demographic processes—mortality, fertility and migration. The author discusses the impact of famines on all these processes. He further highlights the interaction between famine conditions and epidemics, and discusses in details the differential mortality effects of famines upon different sub-groups in the population such as rural, urban, male-female and different sub-regions of the areas affected.

In India, despite frequent famines throughout its recorded history, hardly any studies have been done on the interrelationship between famine conditions and demographic processes. This is therefore, an unique scholarly work in the field of India's historical demography.

**Ms. K. P. Singh**  
Chandigarh

Carol J. Auster. 1996. *The Sociology of Work: Concept and Cases*. California: Pine Forge Press. Pp. xxx + 456. \$ 34.95 (paper).

This is an innovative and useful book for an introductory-level course in the sociology of work and occupations. This area of study is presently becoming attractive to a variety of students though the available books

can only offer a limited range of views. The volume is also the first of its kind, offering students both theories and case studies in an integrated form. The central argument that runs through this volume is that the world of work, like other aspects of our life, is largely affected by the people, organizations and society around us.

The book is divided into seven chapters and each chapter, covering a particular topic, has two sections: the first focussing on current trends, important concepts and theoretical perspectives and the second containing relevant case studies which are often contrasting. The author, apart from providing a conclusion of her effective discussion and the necessary reading list for each chapter, also enlists a glossary of important terms at the end of the book. Her language is very lucid and her technique of arranging material is effective.

The book covers a wide range of issues: trends in work and leisure, relationship between work and leisure, occupational choice and the factors influencing such choice, occupational socialization and modern influences on such a process, impact of work environment on workers' feeling of satisfaction, alienation and stress, occupational and modern influences on such a process, impact of work environment on workers' feeling of satisfaction, alienation and stress, occupational deviance and its causes, the link between work and family, and finally the future of work and occupation. The issues of gender and race/ethnicity are also addressed in the case studies. The coverage is impressive though not exhaustive. The author, for instance, should have included a discussion on workers' organization and its influences. Also the discussion on recent trends in work excludes two important developments: the emergence of the informal economy, and rise in part-time work.

The book contains 32 case studies drawn from different work experiences. They relate, for instance, to the experience of British railwaymen and architects, San Francisco's scavengers, Mexican American women, police women in Washington D.C., rural poultry process workers (U.S.A.), Hollywood actors, medical and legal practitioners, waiters and insurance workers, saleswomen and farm workers (U.S.A.), high steel iron workers, taxi drivers of Montreal, dual-career couples, and the like. Some of these ethnographic collections may even benefit students of industrial sociology at post-graduate level. These case studies bring alive the workers' feelings, attitudes and

behaviour for the reader. The author also deserves credit for editing the original texts written for a professional audience thereby making them interesting and relevant to the beginners. The book, however, represents the views and experiences of the First World and more particularly of the U.S.A. To produce such textbooks containing case studies which neglect the Third World and Indian experience is a challenge that should be seriously taken up by Indian sociologists.

**Biswajit Ghosh**

Department of Sociology  
Burdwan University  
West Bengal

D. Bakshi Sinha and P. S. K. Menon (eds). 1996. *Environmental Sanitation, Health and Panchayati Raj*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company. Pp. 134. Rs. 200.

This book is based on an extensive study undertaken by the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi in the area of rural development with primary focus upon the issues of health and sanitation. The book is divided into three parts. The Introduction draws a brief sketch of government policies and programmes in health and sanitation. The second part deals with a comparative study of the implementation and monitoring of the experimental sanitation and health programmes as initiated by the government, non-governmental and international development agencies within the states of Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra. The book ends with a discussion on the possibility of an appropriate environmental sanitation and health model suitable for adoption and implementation by the new *panchayati raj* structure.

Perceptive observers hold that appropriate sanitation and provision of drinking water are very important considerations in formulating the Strategy of Health for All (HFA). Here, sanitation has been considered as a composite and comprehensive expression covering personal hygiene, domestic cleanliness, favourable environmental conditions, safe disposal of human excreta, solid waste and waste water disposal. In compliance with the holistic concept of sanitation, the objectives sought

to be achieved through the programmes were: i) raising people's awareness of health and sanitation programmes, ii) reducing infant mortality rate, iii) reducing the spread of water borne diseases, iv) provision of adequate sanitation facilities and safe-drinking water, and v) promoting income generating activities among the womenfolk of the area.

The present study stipulates that the government-initiated health and sanitation programmes have been able to achieve the planned objectives in the states of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan and West Bengal. Many factors seem to have contributed to the success. The planned use of the available infrastructure of the government, leadership and motivation, organization of work at the district, block and village levels, involvement of youth clubs in the villages and of the local *panchayats*, formal training of 'village moderators' from among the local people, establishment of 'sanitary marts' in every region are some of the contributing factors. The government-initiated sanitary programme in Uttar Pradesh, however, did not make any significant impact on the people. This was mainly due to the sheer lack of people's participation in the programme. The services and facilities were created for the people without creating the requisite awareness among them and without making them realise the need for such programmes. In Orissa, the piecemeal efforts of the government officials could not bring any significant improvement.

An inference that emerges strongly from this study is that no development programme can improve the lives of the people unless it becomes a grassroots level movement involving the local people and local resources at every stage of the programme. This is a useful study. Its value would have been enhanced, however, if the quantitative data on resource creation and utilisation were substantiated with some case studies highlighting the improved health and sanitation status of the people.

**Mala Bhandari**  
Jodhpur, Rajasthan

D. Parthasarthy. 1997. *Collective Violence in a Provincial City*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. xiv + 204. Rs. 395.

Violence arises when one group 'resists the claims being made by another' and it has become the order of the day in contemporary urban India. Yet, urban violence has remained a relatively neglected area of research among sociologists. Therefore, this study of urban violence is a timely intervention in the emerging debate on urban processes in India.

This book is a revised version of a doctoral thesis. The author has tried to explain endemic violence between different kinds of groups, violence between and among groups, political parties and caste groups during the last five decades in Vijayawada, which the author regards as a provincial city. For the author, a provincial city is one which owes its growth and its distinct traits to, and is dominated by a rich peasant class. Here, in the provincial city collective violence has a distinctive form which is different from the usual pattern observed in the larger metropolises. The dominant peasant class in Vijayawada uses its own methods (illegal or semi-legal) to achieve and maintain social mobility, social status and political power. These methods are considered as the main factors responsible for collective violence in the city.

The author argues that collective violence is an outcome of the typical structures and processes pertaining to the social economic, demographic, cultural and physical aspects of the city. Contrary to the view which considers violence as an outcome of frustration and deprivation, the author has convincingly established that in Vijayawada it is the result of the large-scale illegalities committed in the city by the dominant peasant class. The violent episodes are based on rational calculation, are selective and pre-planned in nature. Consequently violent episodes are not considered as illegitimate in the city culture.

Although this is a well written book, proper revision would have made it a really fine volume. It still reads like a doctoral thesis. The detailed review of the literature may enhance its value for the researcher but distracts the reader from the main argument. It nevertheless is a welcome addition to the studies on urban sociology as well as political sociology. There is an urgent need to replicate such studies in the

context of other cities as well. The ongoing criminalization of politics in urban India enhances the relevance of this book for political leaders, city managers and urban planners.

**Ravinder Singh Sandhu**

Department of Sociology  
Guru Nanak Dev University  
Amritsar

K. L. Sharma. 1997. *Social Stratification in India: Issues and Themes*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. 212. Rs. 295 (cloth); Rs. 165 (paper).

The present study is a revised version of the author's trend report on studies in social stratification in India that he prepared for the Indian Council of Social Science Research for the period 1979-89. The agenda that the author sets for himself is quite exciting. He begins his present engagement of review thus: 'An effort has been made in this volume not only to report trends in the study of social stratification, emphasis is also laid on understanding and explanation of the ideology, structure and process of social inequality both temporally and contextually' (p. 10). Yogendra Singh's two earlier trend reports are used as 'base lines' for locating 'shifts' in theoretical, methodological, structural and processual aspects in studies of social stratification. The author informs us at the start that he aims at combining aspects of 'historicity and change' in relation to specific contexts such as rural-agrarian and urban-industrial, and to segments of society such as the weaker sections and women.

Sharma applies what he calls a 'nexus approach' to the study of social stratification in India. First, he applies this to understanding the relationship between caste and class. Animated by a desire to combine a 'culturological and structural approach' Sharma writes: 'culture has materiality in the background, and class has culture hidden under it. Uncovering of the underlying layers of formations from the apparent structures brings home the hypothesis that caste inheres class and class inheres caste, and hence caste and class are not antinomies' (p. 10). But in his nexus approach, Sharma does not confine himself only to the configuration of the relationship between caste and class, he also wishes to include within it the work of power when he states that the 'caste-class-power nexus' approach, rather than the causal and

dimensional approaches is significantly relevant for analysing social stratification and mobility.' While theoretically such an approach is full of promise, Sharma does not provide us with any empirical illustration, either from his own work or from that of the others reviewed in this book.

Another quite promising item with which Sharma starts his agenda is his preference for a 'multi-disciplinary treatment' of social stratification which for him is a 'multifaceted and multi-causal' problem. He moves across a wide spectrum and crosses many disciplinary terrains in this review; not confining himself to the work of sociologists only. He creatively touches on the work of historians, economists, political scientists, gender studies scholars and even of scholars of literature studies, as for example, in the chapter, 'Gender and Social Stratification', where after reviewing the work of social scientists, Sharma makes a reference to the literary theorist Rajeswari Sundarajan, urging us to see the two faces of woman—the 'real and imagined'. This multi-disciplinary engagement can certainly help broaden our identities, as many practising sociologists tend to think only within the disciplinary prism of sociology.

The review of the studies on social stratification in India is divided into the following sections: culture and social stratification, social stratification in rural-agrarian setting, social stratification in urban-industrial setting, social stratification, and social mobility. Each of these chapters contain a review of the literature on social stratification. But Sharma primarily moves from one study to another, from one book to another, with only occasional critical comments. His account is also not one of critical description, since he does not stay with any single author for long and is, understandably, drawn by an anxiety to move on. But as a reader one is always eager to know more about the more significant authors and their contributions. For example, Sharma cursorily refers to Leela Dube's work in the following words: 'Leela Dube discusses the relationship between man and woman through the metaphoric use of the seed and the earth' (p. 139). But one would have liked to know what exactly Dube says on this matter. In an encyclopedic review of this kind it is understandably difficult to do justice to each author in detail, but Sharma could have given a few more details on the authors of the more seminal contributions, and a more comprehensive



and critical account of their work.

Although the ideas in these chapters seem awkwardly presented, probably due to Sharma's style of writing, there are nonetheless many invaluable insights in his review of each of the domains of stratification. While taking extensive notes from the book on my first reading I was struck by the renewed significance of the points made in his statement that 'Today the dominant castes are not necessarily the twice-born castes. The dominant caste could well signify a section of a particular caste group, not necessarily the entire caste-group' (p. 81).

Another example of such insight can be found in his word of caution in using the concept of vertical mobility to understand social inequality in India (p. 16), as he feels that this concept has been applied uninhibitedly in the study of social stratification and that its implied meanings 'do not help much in the understanding of social inequality in India' (p. 16). He says: 'Vertical mobility presupposes availability of avenues for structural changes in the system of social stratification with individual as a unit of ranking. But such a concept is hardly relevant because of the lack of requisite openness and the absence of the individual as the unit of social ranking in Indian society' (Ibid). Similarly, his statement 'Despite persisting inequalities and emerging new hierarchies, the constitutional provisions, legal enactments and social movements in particular have reduced social inequalities as reflected in the structural transformation and normative reorientation during the past few decades' (p. 205) offers a ray of hope which one rarely gets from students of social inequality. This is stated in the concluding paragraph of the last chapter of the book, in which the author observes: 'Today, not only is the dimensional analysis of social stratification under serious scrutiny, the very concepts of caste, class, and power are reformulated to make them relevant for analysing historically specific Indian situation' (p. 204). But Sharma himself neither provides such a conceptual reformulation nor is he in dialogue with recent interlocutors in the realm of social theory who may have suggested steps towards a widening of the universe of discourse of such concepts.

Take, for example, the concept of power. What is the challenge for reformulating this concept today? Sharma here refers only to the work of Michael Foucault although he is himself aware that 'Foucault's

concept of power is within the Weberian understanding of power as the domination of the self over the other' (p. 23). But if social theory is to contribute to a normative reorientation, as hinted by Sharma, then there is a need to move beyond Weber's meaning of power as domination to a view of power as moral influence, persuasion and the ability to hold the hands of the other in order to transform both the self and the other. In order to complete the task of conceptual reformulation that Sharma himself presents us, it is necessary to extend the conversation beyond Michael Foucault. A reference to such a reformulated notion of power is available in the work of Hannah Arendt and Jurgen Habermas. Arendt has argued that power is 'acting in concert, on the basis of making and keeping promises, mutually binding one another and covenanting'. Similarly, Habermas also sees the reconstruction of power as communicative power, arising out of human conversation and mutual recognition rather than as an attribute of domination of the self over the other.

A review of the kind that Sharma is engaged in is admittedly a difficult task since he is constrained from foregrounding his own position as his main task is to analyse the works of various authors. Hence the reader eagerly waits for the concluding chapter in which he hopes to find the author's views given free play, expecting him to provide an overall assessment of the field and to highlight the new departures. Sadly, one misses both these despite the book's promise of exploring new directions.

**Ananta Giri**

Madras Institute of Development Studies  
Chennai

Naila Kabeer. 1994. *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. New Delhi: Kali for Women. Pp. xi + 346. Rs. 375.

Naila Kabeer's *Reversed Realities* is a comprehensive interdisciplinary work in the area of gender and development. The author not only delineates a systematic critique of mainstream development discourses but provides radical alternatives which will be useful in theoretical

analysis as well as in the implementation of development policies. The book is written from the point of view of a feminist economist who has a thorough understanding of mainstream economic theory as well as existing development discourses. Kabeer provides a link between development thought and action, or in other words, the ways of thinking and the ways of doing, and gives theoretical as well as practical alternatives to approach real problems that are faced by real people.

*Reversed Realities* traces the historical context of the emergence of the visibility of women as an important constituency of development. The earliest was the WID (Women in Development) approach, which was only a symbolic inclusion of women in development seminars and edited volumes but without either material support or political commitment. Kabeer systematically traces the history of the WID approach as a movement from a liberal-equilibrium view that is shared by WID and mainstream development economics, to a more structuralist-Marxist understanding of WID. There was subsequently a shift in development theory from the WID approach to gender analysis which can be used to address and understand the problems of domination and subordination. Kabeer asks for a rethinking on development issues from a gender perspective. Here, critical introspection is required both in the production of knowledge and the allocation of resources.

From macro-level development theory and the deconstruction of dominant paradigms in development discourse, Kabeer moves on to more micro-level aspects such as household economics and women's experiences of poverty, and questions the usefulness of cost-benefit analysis in gender planning. The 10 chapters in the book were written at different points of time and can be also be read by themselves.

The chapter that deals with the politics of population policy is useful in understanding population control from the feminist perspective, or from the perspective of the women involved in the whole process of decision-making. Population studies from a gender perspective look at the male's marginal role in taking responsibility in family planning and discuss how to make men visible in family planning programmes. There is a critical discussion on the marginalization of women's reproductive health from health policy that eventually leads to the deterioration of their general health condition. Kabeer reiterates that choices, both reproductive and otherwise, remains at the level of obstruction unless it

is supported by resources, information and enfranchisement.

Finally, Kabeer discusses training methodologies that deal with gender issues in development. She suggests the need to link discussions of gender inequality to the rules and practices of different institutions that participate and interact in the development process. Gender relations have to be understood within the wider social context where women are positioned, that is, within the other social relations of class, ethnicity, and the like. Training programmes should recognize that women's interests are not given but emerge through a process of struggle and subordination. The book emphasizes that women's empowerment cannot be a top down phenomenon, but it has to be seen from the perspective of the people below. Participation of the poorer women cannot stop at the NGO or project level but has to intervene into the policy-making agenda and be a sustained influence on larger development processes. Hence, analysis of gender relations has gone beyond the household and the market to the planning agencies. Kabeer argues rather forcefully and effectively that the main agents of change in the planning process should be those whose voices have been long suppressed in the development process. The relation between thought and action is the key theme that is explored in this work.

This book will be useful to courses that focus on gender as well as courses the more conventional 'Sociology of Development' courses. Courses in economics, political science and sociology marginalize issues of gender and development; this book will provide both students as well as teachers alternative ways of understanding and studying theoretical and policy issues in development. The book has several examples from different parts of the world as well as a long and useful bibliography. Kabeer has not however, discussed the politics of the gender and development discourse in the so-called 'developed' and 'developing' nations and of the debate on using Western feminist perspectives in understanding other cultures. Despite this, it is one of the most comprehensive works in gender studies that has appeared in this decade, particularly because of the strong links between the theoretical issues and real life problems of the women in question.

**Aparna Rayaprol**

Tata Institute of Social Sciences  
Mumbai

Renuka Singh. 1997. *Women Reborn: An Exploration of the Spirituality of Urban Indian Women*. New Delhi: Penguin. Pp. 219. Rs. 200.

The author is interested in the discovering spirituality in modern urban Indian women by studying the accounts of their personal experiences. The urban woman in India, though bound by traditional roles and obligations, desires to explore several opportunities that modern life offers her as an individual. Various modes of empowerment such as education, search for an independent career or even politics are used by these women to transcend socially constructed roles and gain recognition for themselves as individuals. According to the author, spirituality can also be regarded as another mode of self-realisation. Instead of attempting to realise oneself through achievements in the outer world, the path of spirituality focuses on inner enlightenment. The book therefore studies spirituality as an aspect of liberation. The author thus promises to break some fresh ground in the study of spirituality but the reader is left disappointed. The book makes for an enjoyable afternoon reading but certain severe shortcomings have made it unfit for serious sociology.

The author shows a reluctance to define spirituality clearly. There is also inadequate enunciation of the empowerment that is conferred by spirituality. Often the path of spirituality may merely provide a rationalization for the woman to accept and tolerate oppression. It may also become a means of escapism. The author claims to have studied spirituality differently from the conventional studies of religion which look at it as an externally bounded phenomenon. For the author spirituality is embedded various facets of a woman's life: mother-daughter relationships, sexuality and family relationships. The author, however, fails to see spirituality in the mundanity of everyday life. Even routine events or relationships may, on occasion, take on the aspect of the sublime and the sacred. The reader may, however, use the detailed interviews provided in the book to make her/his own deductions and see the interconnections between different facets of life of the interviewees.

The author claims to have studied spirituality among the urban women phenomenologically so that each interview is seen to be a set of linguistic symbols rather than real events. But she uses this approach as

a means for imposing her own interpretation of her interviewees' views on religion. For instance, two of the subjects—the counsellor and the doctor—are religious not because the pressures of professional life and traditional roles frazzle them as the author implies, but because they have achieved a certain harmony in coping with the apparently conflicting demands made upon them. Similarly, there are two persons, a beautician and a designer who appear to be very confused persons. For them religion is either an escape mechanism or a mechanism to deny new experiences. The interviews have revealed that these women have been quite unable to adapt to life's processes. But the author feels that these women have taken to spirituality in order to confront the pressures of change. Such misunderstandings have arisen because instead of accepting the persons interviewed on their own terms the author is eager to cite them as instances of her own preconceived theories.

If one leaves aside the author's observations, and approaches the interviews as independent texts, the book acquires a new meaning. It then reveals how women from different backgrounds and with different missions in their lives regard religion and the different ways in which they relate to spirituality. For instance, the spirituality that the counsellor and the doctor possess is a direct realisation of their responsibilities and the command they have over the lives of their clients. The writer's true moment of spirituality surfaces when she abandons her faith in the sacred completely and accepts life as it comes to her. The librarian seeks out spirituality as a part of her learning process; for her learning itself becomes a sublime experience. The singer experiences spirituality in her 'guru' who becomes a substitute for her family in which she has been somewhat of a misfit. The freedom fighter takes to religion in order to forge a moral superiority upon her contemporaries. The author's mission of finding spirituality within the modern woman's life and of considering it as the locus of self-fulfilment and self-empowerment is fulfilled if the reader focuses on the interviews and skips the comments and interpretations offered by the author.

**Sushmita Das Gupta**

Centre for the Study of Social Systems  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi

R. S. Bora. 1996. *Himalayan Migration: A Study of the Hill Region of Uttar Pradesh*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. 195p. Rs. 295.

This book grew out of a doctoral thesis. The major focus of the book is on the measurement of the extent, causes and impact of out-migration on the hill region. The original contribution of the book lies in the estimation of benefits and costs of out-migration at the individual, household and regional levels.

The hill economy in U. P. has been categorized as a 'money order economy'. Earlier studies had shown that in the rural areas of the hill region, between 27 to 74 per cent of the male workers were found to be absent and worked outside their villages. The researchers believed that the effect of out-migration on the hill economy was positive. By computing the Net Present Value (NPV) of out-migration, Bora shows that the present value of benefits from out-migration is lower than the present value of costs in the form of forgone earnings. To quote:

For every Rs. 1 of present value of forgone earnings, the present value of benefits received in the form of remittances and pensions ranges between 90 to 99 paise when the period of out-migration is as long as 40 years. If the average period of out-migration is 14 years, the latter comes down to 83-87 paise. Thus, the net result is that out-migration is not beneficial to the U. P. Hill regions.

The findings of the book present a serious challenge to the commonly prevailing theory of rural-urban migration. There is a need to apply the cost-benefit approach as developed by Bora to migration data in different settings. If his theory is corroborated, it can lead to a paradigm shift in the theorisation of migration in general and rural-urban migration in particular. Why should we always assume that by nature man is sedentary and he moves only if he is pushed or pulled by external factors? Can we not alternatively assume that man is by nature restless. It is the social and institutional constraints which make him stay attached to a particular place. These and related issues have often been raised by philosophers of migration but have been ignored by empirical researchers. Bora's analysis is based on data collected through a pre-tested 'questionnaire schedule', from 10 villages of Pithoragarh and

Tehri Garhwal districts of the hill region. These districts were selected randomly. Typically they represent the backwardness of the hill region. For the selection of villages the stratified random sampling method was used, in which three strata were formed on the basis of the size of the village and the level of development. All the households in the selected villages, totalling 524, were included in the study. Data were collected from February 1985 to September 1985.

The book presents useful data on the characteristics of the migrants and of the sample households. An attempt has also been made to capture the lives of the out-migrants from the selected villages who are currently living in Delhi. Interestingly, the two major reasons for coming to Delhi were: 'Family members were living' (43.2 per cent) and 'Relatives, friends, villagers were living' (40.9 per cent). Migration to Delhi is a story of many frustrations and expectations. In spite of the fact that the benefits from out-migration are either nil or negative to the hill region, a majority of the immigrant workers from the region in Delhi were able to acquire a job within six months. Those who were employed were able to increase their income by about 13 times during the course of the 17 years of their stay. Their living conditions seem to be satisfactory. 'All had aspirations of owning their own houses. In fact, many had already fulfilled this aspiration or were in the process of fulfilling it, as 16 per cent had their own houses and 19 per cent had acquired housing plots in unauthorised colonies.'

This is a highly readable book and a useful contribution to migration studies.

**A. K. Sharma**

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Indian Institute of Technology  
Kanpur

Siddique Ahmad. 1997. *Criminology: Problems and Perspectives*, Lucknow: Eastern Book Co. Pp. 584. Rs. 160.

All new books on criminology in India are welcome. However, the book under review, which is a revised edition (fourth) and presents 17 chapters, has been conceived and designed more for students of Law



than of Sociology and Criminology. Though the author has covered a large number of topics prescribed in Sociology and Criminology courses in various universities the coverage is inadequate. For example, in Chapter 4, the analysis of sociological theories of Sutherland, Merton and Cohen is very inadequate. The chapter does not discuss the important theories of Cloward and Ohlin, Miller, Howard Becker, Walter Reckless, Matza and Sykes, and Cyril Burt on causes of crime. Chapter 6 on Prisons does not even refer to the important concept of 'prisonisation' to explain whether prisons actually function as correctional institutions. Open prisons are discussed hardly in two pages. Some topics like professional crime, female offenders, crimes against women, political crime, and judiciary prescribed in several universities have not been discussed at all. Perhaps the constraint was of number of pages (the book already has 584 pages). However, chapters on criminal law, juvenile institutions, police, sentencing, and punitive reaction to crime, are well written.

The weakness of the book is that it does not provide adequate statistics on various aspects of crime and criminals in India, including prisons, open jails, probationers, juvenile delinquents, organized gangs, white-collar crime, drug abuse, and so forth. These statistics would have greatly enhanced the utility of the book for research students. The empirical studies by many Indian authors on juvenile delinquency, prisons, probation, drug abuse and other such issues have been ignored. The bibliography does not mention many Indian books published on the various themes of Criminology.

Why do text-book writers shirk the responsibility of raising some significant questions and providing some possible answers to them? In this book also, questions like how to make probation effective, how to make readjustment of inmates in prisons feasible, how to restructure juvenile institutions, how to make open prisons more functional, how to provide compensation to victims, what motivates judicial officials to take lenient attitude towards white-collar criminals, and so on have been left untouched. Recreating something new and vibrant by writers is essential.

All in all, the book is a valuable contribution on the subject. It will definitely prove useful to Criminology students and teachers. The efforts of the author are to be appreciated. The price is also moderate which

students can afford easily. Since the book is written with a sense of commitment, it will be used not only as a text-book but also as reference material by research scholars in the subject.

**Ram Ahuja**

Jaipur

Sumi Krishna. 1996. *Environmental Politics: People's Lives and Development Choices*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. 303. Rs. 350.

'Change is always welcome' might be a phrase in common usage but to those who are concerned with environment, it triggers off negative thoughts. The dominance of modern Western mode of development which is a legacy of colonialism has associated change with ecologically unsound programmes and policies.

Some ecologists seek technological answers to this crisis along with certain institutional changes within the broad framework of the Western development model. There are others who visualize an alternative only in the abandonment of the existing development paradigm for a more suitable, indigenous solution. There is yet another section who feel that it is only by rectifying the existing inequities of our system that ecological solutions can emerge. They believe that there is enough for everyone but it is unequally distributed and therefore grossly mismanaged.

The author evaluates these approaches using numerous examples. Her evaluation is comprehensive, covering most of the issues raised in the debate on ecology including issues relating to population sustainable development and technology. In the process she highlights some of the limitations inherent in these approaches.

Ecologists' concern for the natural environment may be well founded but the employment opportunities, better quality of life in terms of health, basic facilities like water for drinking and irrigation, and education are also equally important. Just as there is a necessity to search for alternatives for the ecological crisis, there is a need to provide alternatives to those who are already affected by this crisis and are unable to fulfill their requirements from the ecological niche they inhabit. Moreover, the complex nature of human interaction and the multiplicity of human interests at the grassroots level are often ignored by the ecologists whose zeal to conserve the environment often serves

the purposes of those who are least concerned with it. This usually denies the people the right to development choices.

The search for an alternative vision to the existing ecological crisis has coaxed a number of ecologists to review the role of certain social institutions which have been instrumental in providing an ecologically viable system in the past. For example Ramachandra Guha has highlighted the important role of the caste system in ensuring prudent resource use in India. The eco-feminists also have, in equating women with 'nature', resurrected women's role as 'nurturers'. Oppressive as this role might be for women, since it shifts the burden of conservation on to women, it also encourages and strengthens believers of biological determinism. A similar biological determinism can be witnessed in the case of tribal communities who are seen to possess the ecological wisdom to manage their environment, even if this goes against the developmentalist's attitude of looking down upon all that is considered tribal, which by derivation becomes backward, primitive and uncivilized.

The ecologists' view, the author argues, is disturbing. They promote conservation of culture for ecological purposes. They also uproot social practices and religious beliefs from their contexts and deny multiple historical interpretations of culture to serve the selfish ends of conservation.

Raising the issue of women's rights on land. Sumi Krishna wonders as to why the ecologists who insist on community ownership of land have not considered it. In fact, the category "community" has always been understood as a homogenous one. This is a myth. The ecologists need to counter this myth and not strengthen it. A critical analysis of community participation programmes initiated by NGOs and activists will highlight the difficulties of organizing people at the level of the community. Rights of a community is not the same thing as rights within a community. Ecologists may be well aware of this fact but an acknowledgement of it may defeat their eccentric concerns.

Till date, movements which have tried to redress the incongruities of any social system have been considered essentially political in nature and only secondarily as environmental. The classic example, she cites, is that of the Jharkhand Movement and the Gonds of Adilabad. The Chipko Movement, on the other hand, became an 'environmental icon'

which was exploited to the hilt by the state in as much as it boosted the environmental movement in India. Though her observation is well taken, she must however, acknowledge the fact that all movements are subject to change, not only at the level of base politics, but also at the level of its agenda. The Jharkhand movement is one such. Most Jharkhandis themselves would not have considered their mission to have been an environmental one till not so long ago. Moreover, the issue of environment is not just about restoring control over resources to the communities involved but it also envisages a novel form of resource utilization and a distinctive institutional set up. It is here that differences between ecologists and the Jharkhandis may arise.

The author directs our attention to the global implications as well as pressures on India regarding issues like population, technology, intensive agriculture and sustainable development. Any debate on these issues would require that we achieve some semblance of equity, nationally and internationally, and spread an awareness among the people about the changes that are affecting their lives. The market economy has spread even in the most remote areas of India. There is a need, one feels, to educate people about it so that they are able to cope with the impersonality of the system.

The recent debate on Intellectual Property Rights has threatened our entire resource utilization system and our bio-diversity. Therefore, it becomes important to take certain critical political decisions on environmental issues. Hence the author wants the ecologists to redirect environmentalism by combining political struggles with environmental ones, or rather by acknowledging the political dimensions of the latter. She also articulates a need for decentralization and strengthening of local bodies for democratic participation so that concerns such as employment, health and education can be addressed.

Environmentalism should, according to Sumit Krishna, enlarge the range of choices for people not diminish them. Surely it should, but one needs to move beyond polemics. To make a choice is not a simple matter. Choices are made in situations which are already politically determined. Politics necessarily moulds and creates choice from within its parameters of interests and ideologies and suppresses those that do not subscribe to it or fall outside it. The politics of development does not offer choices but encourages obedience. It is no longer a question of

enlarging the range of choices but of accepting the situation created by the processes of modernization to ensure survival. The ecologists who challenges this politics make us aware of this uncritical acceptance of modernity. Therein lies the ecologist's effort to diminish the effect of Western, borrowed values and modes of living to retain our own. However, does the ecologist practice what s/he preaches? This is the dilemma of our time.

**Ritambhara Hebbar**

Department of Sociology  
University of Delhi

T. K. Oommen. 1997. *Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity: Reconciling Competing Identities*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. viii + 270.

India was partitioned fifty years ago on the basis of the so-called 'two nation theory'. While its proponents argued that the Hindus and the Muslims of the subcontinent were the bearers of two separate and in some respects mutually opposed ways of life (civilizations), its critics contended that behind the facade of civilizational conflict lay a medieval mode of thinking that conceived of religious identity as an adequate basis for nationhood and state-formation. T. K. Oommen, who has already given us several books dealing with this and related questions, now embraces a broad, empirically comparative and theoretically articulated, perspective to question the equation of the nation with the state. Such an equation is, he argues, an illegitimate inference from the historically specific West European experience. It cannot be regarded as a generalization valid for other parts of the world (Asia, Africa). The comparative perspective that Oommen adopts also exposes the untenability of race and religion as viable bases for state formation and citizenship.

Basing his conceptualization of nationality and citizenship on the crucial criteria of the territorial bond and communication, Oommen recommends a cultural pluralist view: peoples of diverse racial, cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds have a right to claim common nationality and equal citizenship rights if they share territory,

communicate with one another, and affirm a sense of belonging expressed through duties no less than rights and through symbols and sentiments. I share this view though I am not always comfortable with Oommen's phraseology. Thus, he defines the nation as 'a totality comprising all those who consider the nation as their homeland, irrespective of their background' (pp. 5, 19). I am not sure about the notion of nation as homeland, though I agree that nations demand or defend homelands—that the nation is a territorial entity.

Oommen's book is based on an explicit affirmation of the importance of conceptual clarity for adequate understanding of societal structures and processes. Once again I agree. The three key concepts that he employs to organize an impressive body of empirical material are announced in the title of the book. I have already hinted at Oommen's approach to nationality and citizenship. His third term ethnicity is of course of enormous contemporary concern. He derives it from the substantive notion of 'ethnie' elaborated by Anthony Smith. Its characteristics are said to be 'a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity' (p. 35). An ethnie becomes a nation, Oommen adds, when it acquires its own territory. 'Ethnification' is thus a differentiating process that clashes with homogenization or nationalization. The problems this conceptualization creates (e. g. 'conflation' and 'subsumption') are discussed in chapter 3 of the book. The crucial task, he contends, is how to maintain the 'conjuncture' (or concord) of citizenship, nationality and ethnicity. The book is an ambitious venture to examine the foregoing problems along the axes of theoretical clarification and empirical validation.

Oommen stresses pluralism as a value and citizenship as an instrument that may be employed to 'reconcile the two identities of nationality and ethnicity and the competing demands of equality and identity' (p. 243).

The book is a product of widespread reading (covering the first, second and third worlds) and careful reflection. While one does not always have to agree with all of Oommen's procedures and conclusions, one could hardly question the importance of the issues he formulates and the perspectives he advocates, notably cultural pluralism. The book is divided into three parts comprising eleven chapters. In part one he